

MARRIAGE  
FOR  
MODERNS

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McGRAW-HILL PUBLICATIONS IN SOCIOLOGY  
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## MARRIAGE FOR MODERNS

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# MARRIAGE FOR MODERNS

*By Henry A. Bowman*

Stephens College, Columbia, Mo.

FIRST EDITION



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MARRIAGE FOR MODERNS

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*To*

E. K. B.





## PREFACE

Successful marriage is not something that comes full-blown to every young person who has a romantic impulse. It is not a gift of nature offered free to anyone who will but pluck it lazily from an uncultivated vine. It is a creative achievement. As such it demands effort, requires sound knowledge and healthy attitudes, and is grounded in solid idealism.

In a sense, all life is preparation—good or bad—for marriage. In another sense, however, there are certain things that may be considered preparation of a more specific type. The aim of this book is to point out the significance of the former type of preparation and to assist the reader in the latter type. Some of the equipment needed the reader already has—his growing personality, his home background, his special abilities, his experience up to date. Other equipment he is in the process of acquiring. It is the aim of this book to aid him in this process by bringing him into contact with facts, principles, attitudes, and problems that are likely to play a part in marriage.

This book does not purport to answer every question. Not all the answers are known and many are highly individualized. Neither does it purport to present every detail of fact or solve every problem. No single book could do that, and much is learned from observation and experience after the wedding. But the book does aim to answer some of the questions that young people repeatedly ask. It has grown out of seven years of teaching a marriage course. During those years more than twelve hundred college students have been in my classes. Several hundred of them have come to me for individual conferences on personal problems connected in one way or another with preparation for marriage. In scores of discussion groups, other than college classes, barrages of questions have been turned in my direction. Each year my students have filled out inquiry forms on which they stated suggestions and criticisms, questions unanswered, and problems still unsolved. In a very real sense,

then, this book has been produced in part by persons of the same type as those who will read it. For this contribution I am deeply grateful.

In the development of the marriage course at Stephens College and in the writing of this book I have incurred other indebtedness, which it is a pleasure to acknowledge. To President James M. Wood and Dr. W. W. Charters I am indebted not only for continued confidence and support but also for introducing me to the challenging concept of functional education with its emphasis on student needs, interests, and abilities. That concept permeates this book. I owe much to Dean Weldon P. Shofstall and Dean B. Lamar Johnson for their unfaltering support and helpful criticism when excursions were being made into a relatively new field, where guideposts were scarce and mistakes abundant. Dr. Paul Popenoe of the American Institute of Family Relations introduced me to the field of marital counseling and generously gave me the benefits of his experience and placed the facilities of the Institute at my disposal. Several persons undertook the arduous task of reading the manuscript. To Robert Bowman, M.D., William Byrne Brown, M.D., Kathryn Colvin, Helen Garvey, Clara Mortensen, Philip Powers, Carl Rexroad, May Rexroad, Dorothy Shofstall, Martha Simpson, and Blaine Williams go my thanks for invaluable assistance. The Williams and Wilkins Company & Harper and Brothers generously permitted the use of illustrations from their publications. Other publishers have given permission to quote materials, and acknowledgment is made in each instance.

I am especially grateful to my wife, Edna Bowman, for the innumerable ways in which she has helped; for her interest and critical judgment; for her typing, correcting, and proofreading of the manuscript; for her faith when others doubted. Without her this book would have been impossible.

HENRY A. BOWMAN.

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# MARRIAGE FOR MODERNS

## CHAPTER I

### A POINT OF DEPARTURE

That the human race is composed of beings of two types—male and female—is one of the fundamental facts of existence. It is a fact that at first glance may seem too obvious to mention. Yet it is one often ignored or overlooked by the individual and by the group, in our independent and concerted efforts to raise the plane of satisfaction in living. This fact of bisexuality is one of the foundation stones of life. It is one of the inevitables which everyone must face and to which everyone must orient himself. To find happiness and satisfaction, each of these two types of being must in some way take into account the existence of the other. This implies a continuous process of adjustment.

Adjustment is the fundamental thread running through the relations of men and women. It is the fundamental thread running through marriage; it is the very essence of marriage. It is the point of departure, the springboard, for the discussion in this book.

### SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

We shall not attempt a complete inventory of all the differences between men and women. In fact, at the present stage of knowledge such an inventory is impossible. We can, however, point out some of the more apparent and more commonly assumed differences, in order later to make clear certain generalizations.

**Size.** One of the most obvious differences is that of size. Taken as a group, men are larger than women. This is a matter not only of common observation and statistical fact but also of traditional expectation. Men are expected to be larger than women; husbands are expected to be larger than wives. The contortions of the taller girl in accommodating herself to a shorter

dancing partner, the frequent references to size in girls' discussion of dates, the efforts of the very short man to "inflate" his ego so that he seems (to himself at least) to be as large as other men—all these and many other common observations witness to the fact that men and women are different as to size and that society expects them to be so.

It is important to note, however, that while men as a group are larger than women as a group, there are some women who are larger than some men. There is a good deal of variation within each group; individuals range from relatively tall to relatively short, with the majority clustering around the average. If the sizes of the two groups were plotted on graphs, these graphs would overlap. Size, then, while constituting a rather obvious difference between the sexes, does not make possible the drawing of a hard and fast line between them.

**Bony Framework.** Man's skeleton is not only larger than woman's, it is also more heavily constructed and various parts have different relative proportions. In man the areas to which the muscles are attached tend to be rougher and hence can accommodate larger muscles. In woman the pelvis is relatively broader and shallower so that her legs tend somewhat to form a V while a man's tend to be more nearly parallel, a difference important in athletics. Furthermore, the shallower pelvis makes the woman better adapted for childbearing than she would be if her bony framework were like man's.

**Muscular Strength.** Here again the difference between men and women is obvious and traditionally expected. This difference depends on something more fundamental than training, for in almost all the major competitive sports the best men surpass the best women. In men muscle tissue constitutes a relatively larger proportion of the body weight than it does in women.

**Hair Distribution.** Not only do men tend to have more noticeable body hair than do women, but there is a typical distribution characteristic of each sex, especially with regard to the pubic hair. Men have beards and also have a greater tendency to become bald. Here again there is an overlapping of the traits of the two groups, and there is a certain traditional expectation. Many a man is made the butt of jest because his chest lacks hirsute adornment, while occasionally one hears of a woman who has to

shave her moustache or who earns her living as the "bearded lady" in a side show.

**Fat Distribution.** Women, even slender women, exhibit a greater tendency than men to have a layer of fat deposited under the skin. Perhaps this is one possible reason why women seem better able to withstand cold—they are insulated. It is partly this fat deposit that makes the feminine body tend toward graceful curves while the masculine body tends toward angularities. When they begin to "put on weight," men and women expand first in typically masculine and feminine places respectively.

**Use of Energy.** There is a difference in the rate at which the sexes use energy. It is said that men are better adapted to activities that require a great output of energy in a short period, while women are better adapted to those requiring a more gradual output over a longer period.

**Birth Rate and Death Rate.** For some unknown reason there are more male than female babies born alive. Over a long period in this country the rate averages about 105 boys to each 100 girls. There are variations from year to year; but there are always more boys than girls.

There are also more male babies among those born dead. More males die in infancy. Men are more subject to hazardous occupations and to warfare. The major diseases (with the exception of cancers and other tumors, rheumatic diseases, and of course the diseases associated with childbearing) strike down more males than females. The average expectation of life is slightly less for men than for women.<sup>1</sup> These factors, combined with the fact that women tend to marry at an earlier age than do men, produce a considerably larger number of widows than widowers in every age group in the population over fifteen years old.<sup>2</sup>

This is a rather interesting situation in view of men's traditional claim that they are the stronger sex. When it is a question of muscular strength, men are undoubtedly the stronger. When it is a question of living long, living well, and withstanding the vicissitudes of existence, men must yield the place of honor to women.

<sup>1</sup>SYDENSTRICKER, EDGAR, *The Vitality of the American People*, in "Recent Social Trends," p. 610, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1933.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Census, 1930, Population, II, p. 838.



**Development.**—Physically and emotionally girls develop more rapidly than do boys; they reach maturity sooner. Boys, however, develop over a longer period. Consequently, in their “teens” girls are likely to be further advanced than boys of their own age; but by the time they both reach their twenties, the boys have caught up and they are on similar levels. Nevertheless, neither can acquire more than twenty years’ *experience* in twenty years.

Undoubtedly there are deep-set biological reasons for this more rapid maturing of girls; but may there not also be social reasons? May it not be partly due to the fact that girls are equipped to accept the traditional feminine role in life sooner than boys are equipped to accept the traditional masculine role, which requires more vocational preparation, and that therefore girls seem to mature earlier? Looked at in this way, perhaps girls can in a given period acquire more experience of the type they traditionally need than boys can in a similar period. We have no proof to substantiate this possibility; but it may be taken into consideration in explaining the development of the two sexes.

In their development men tend to exhibit more variations than do women. For example, there are more male geniuses but also more male idiots, more males with color blindness, with club foot. Males tend slightly more to go to extremes; females tend more to cluster around the average.

**Other Differences.** Men are more pugnacious than women; they are not only more prone to fight but are more inclined to enjoy fighting. They express this pugnacity in sports, in business, in warfare, and in many other ways. It is said that women are more adaptable to new situations; that women are better “domesticated” in the sense that they have less tendency to form gangs and are less likely to feel the “call of the wild.” Men tend to consider women vain, while women tend to consider men conceited. Probably they have equally sensitive egos but manifest them differently. Men have a tendency to bellow and beat upon their chests, so to speak, while women are less vociferous in exhibiting their self-esteem.

It is said that women exhibit more social intelligence than do men, that they are more sensitive to group opinion and more eager to improve their social position; but this has not been proved.

Women tend to be more subtle, more indirect in their methods and in achieving their objectives. Perhaps this technique has been forced upon them through centuries of dealing with men. It was and is the most effective way to gain their ends for persons whose inferiority was taken for granted until only yesterday and still is taken for granted in many quarters. Women have become most adept at it.

In courtship men assume the role of pursuer while women assume the role of pursued. Women respond favorably to pursuit by men; men respond unfavorably to pursuit by women. This difference is probably the result of a combination of both biological and traditional factors. When one sex attempts a reversal of role, the other is inclined to resent it. Women almost unconsciously assume the role of the pursued, but not actually to the point of escape. They know that, with custom and men what they are, to seem to run away invites pursuit. Furthermore, to maintain an appearance of indecision and relative indifference with several men is a form of self-protection for a woman; it is the best means available to her to gain the time needed to make a final choice. Men's interest in women, on the other hand, tends to be exhibited more directly, more aggressively, more obviously.

It is often said that women are more emotional while men are more intellectual and more logical, that men reason while women feel. When one witnesses some of the intellectual achievements of modern women, however, and observes some of the mass blunders and primitive expressions of emotions of modern men, one is prone to doubt that there is this assumed difference in intellectual and emotional behavior. The difference between men and women is not that the former reason while the latter feel. The difference is one of type of emotion expressed and degree of freedom in expression.

The common and uncritical assumption is that men have greater freedom than do women. In some respects this is true. Men have greater freedom of activity and are less subject to restriction and direction. They may move about more freely, are chaperoned less carefully, are in some ways freer to determine their own behavior. In other ways, however, men have less freedom than do women. There is some tendency for women to compare their own lot to the more superficial aspects of man's.

It is not all advantage to be a man and all disadvantage to be a woman, as is often supposed.

There are standards of manliness to which men are in a measure forced to adhere. Women are freer to express such emotions as fear, pity, sadness, affection for persons of the same sex. A man may feel like crying, but may not do so for fear of being called "sissy." He may be petrified with fright, but must put on a bold front to avoid being classified as a coward. In some respects, also, men are so overlaid with traditional restrictions and inhibitions as a result of training that they not only do not express such emotions freely but often come to experience them to a lesser degree.

Men are subject to a traditional code of chivalry which, though fading, is still extant and tends to standardize men's behavior. According to this traditional code men must show women courtesies, protect them, assist them, accept their verbal or physical attacks without retaliation. There is no similar code for women.

Most men have no choice as to whether or not they will become wage earners and support their families. Women may or may not work for wages after marriage as they choose. In some cases, to be sure, that choice is forced upon them but not to the same degree or in the same way as it is upon men. When a married woman becomes a wage earner, she does so through choice or because of the exigencies of her individual situation. A man does so partly through choice and partly because of the pressure exerted by the traditional social pattern.

There is a tendency for men to be more interested in facts as such or facts and their general, impersonal significance, while women tend to be more interested in relationships, especially in the personal aspects of those relationships. If one says to a group of women, "Women tend to take things personally," someone in the group will probably retort, "I don't," thereby proving that she does. A young couple recently married visited one evening at the apartment of friends. During the visit the husband observed how attractively the apartment was furnished and, when they returned home, he mentioned his observations to his wife. She said little at the time but for several weeks was quiet and distant. It was apparent that she had been offended. The husband could recall nothing that he had said or done to make her react in this way. When the incident was related during an

interview, it was easily explained. He had made what was to him a simple statement of fact, which had no particular relation to him or to his marriage. The wife had taken his statement personally and interpreted it as a veiled criticism of her home-making; she had read a personal relationship into an impersonal statement. The husband's mistake lay in expecting his wife to react as a man would. If it were only a matter of home furnishings, this difference would not be worth mentioning; but it ramifies all through the behavior of the sexes.

It is probably true that men are more predictable to women than women are to men. The "average" man is likely to throw up his hands and say, "She's only a woman; you can never tell what a woman will do next." Of course he cannot, because he has made so little effort to understand her. By his words "she's only a woman" he implies that he believes her somewhat inferior and probably not worth understanding. Women have been forced through centuries of subjection to understand men. If they have not been able to control men by the direct methods that men use on women, they have been able to exert considerable influence, often without men's being aware of it, because they have learned to understand men and therefore can to a certain degree predict their behavior.

**Conclusion.** We might go on listing and discussing numerous differences between men and women, differences in physical traits, in interests, in attitudes both toward things other than themselves and toward each other, in standards of expectations which the sexes set up for each other and which are set up for them by tradition. As we intimated above, however, our purpose is not to present a complete inventory of differences but rather to provide a springboard for a discussion of marriage relationships.<sup>1</sup> We have said enough to show

1. That men and women are different.

2. That, since they are different, they must adjust to one another in order to find mutual happiness. The enhancement of this adjustment involves not only a general recognition of sex differences but also, in marriage, the observation of the one person with whom the adjustment is to be carried out. Are there not

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller discussion of sex differences, see Lewis M. Terman and Catherine Cox Miles, "Sex and Personality," McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1936.

traits which he exhibits just because he is masculine? Does she not act in a particular way just because she is feminine and is living up to the standard that society sets for women?

3. That although there are important differences, these differences tend to overlap, so that for almost every trait there are some men who exhibit it more clearly than do some women or vice versa. To avoid being tedious, we have not mentioned this fact for every difference, but in each case we have been able to say only "men tend to . . ." or "women are more . . ." In no case have we been able to say "only men are . . ." while only women are . . ." In some instances there are men who for a number of traits are more feminine than average women and some women who for numerous traits are more masculine than average men.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, while there are important differences, there are also important similarities, so that "every individual represents a blend of male and female characteristics of varying grade."<sup>2</sup> This blending extends even to the primary genital organs, men having not only the developed organs of males but also the rudimentary organs of females and women having not only the developed organs of their own sex but also rudimentary male organs. In rare cases a person is found who has the organs of both sexes fairly well developed<sup>3</sup> or who starts life as one sex and later lives as the other—a state of affairs due largely to the fact that the unusual development made for a misinterpretation of sex at the time of birth.<sup>4</sup> "Every individual is bisexual. This extends through life and is evidenced by organs which are homologous in both sexes. One sex generally dominates and the other is undeveloped, but this preponderance can be overturned and extraordinary reversals and mix-up of sexes may occur. . . ."<sup>5</sup> However, there has never been an authenticated case in which the same person could become both a mother and a father.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> HOSKINS, R. G., "The Tides of Life," p. 172, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1933. Reprinted with permission.

<sup>3</sup> YOUNG, HUGH, "Genital Abnormalities, Hermaphroditism, and Related Renal Diseases," pp. 159–171, The Williams & Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1937.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35. Reprinted with permission.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

In addition to the differences between men and women taken as groups, there are individual differences regardless of sex. One might think of the sex differences as sweeping currents, while individual differences are waves rising and falling here and there, superimposed upon but not necessarily dependent upon the currents underneath. There are no two persons exactly alike either as to innate potentialities or as to experience. Habits, tastes, attitudes, ideas, ambitions, and a host of other things make for individual differences, which must also be taken into account in marital adjustment.

We have suggested that there are also important similarities between men and women. Both seek satisfaction in life; both have desires for self-assertion, self-expression, approval, affection. Both have similar physiological processes and an urge toward self-preservation. In the mutual adjustment that marriage entails the similarities as well as the differences must be taken into account.

#### WHAT CAUSES THE DIFFERENCES?

There are several factors which operate together to produce the differences between men and women taken as groups and to make individuals what they are.

**Determiners in the Cells.** Each human being begins life as a single cell. This cell is the result of the fusion of two other cells—one from the mother, one from the father—and contains within it the determiners of the individual's hereditary traits as well as the determiners of sex.

When the original cell divides into two, these two into four, and so on until in the fully grown person there are hundreds of millions of cells, the determiners of sex pass into each of the new cells in the same combination as was found in the first one. The only exception to this is the sex cells of the new individual, in which only one of the pair of determiners is found. In a sense, a person is male or female through and through. All the body cells are male or female as the case may be.

This fact is actually not so all-important as it may seem at first glance. Many factors operating after the new individual is formed and while he is developing may alter his development by affecting the way in which his inborn characteristics, his physiological processes, and his environment react upon one another.

But the fact remains that all his cells, with that one exception, have the same genetic constitution, the same determiners; and because of this he has a strong tendency to fall on one side or the other of the sexual fence.

**Physiological Processes; Glands.** Both sexual and individual differences are produced in part by the way one's body functions, by the physical and chemical processes that occur, by the way one reacts to stimuli. One of the chief factors in determining such processes is one's glandular setup, though there are others that play a significant role. In many important respects we are what our glands make us. Without attempting a thorough analysis of glandular function, let us look briefly at some of the more important glands of internal secretion, the endocrine glands.<sup>1</sup>

When the aroma of a delicious meal is carried to the membranes of your nose, there is an automatic reaction: your salivary glands increase their activity and your "mouth waters." When you witness a sad scene, your lachrymal glands leap into action and secrete an increased amount of salt water; you cry. Glands such as these secrete externally; they do not pour their secretions directly into the blood stream. Other glands are glands of internal secretion. The chemicals (hormones) they produce are secreted directly into the blood and are carried by the blood to all parts of the body.

The *pituitary gland* is located at the base of the brain. It is about the size of a small bean and produces several hormones. One of its functions is the regulation of growth. If in early life there is a deficiency of its hormones, the individual becomes a midget; if there is an oversupply, he becomes a giant. Besides regulating growth, the pituitary plays an important role in sexual development; and its failure to function often produces a type of adiposity (fatness). One of its hormones causes smooth muscle tissue to contract and, since the uterus is composed of this type of muscle, this hormone may conceivably play a part in causing the contractions that bring about childbirth; but this possibility has not yet been given factual substantiation.

We have mentioned only a few of the pituitary's functions. Its biology is extremely complex and in its functions it is inter-related with other major glands, so that if there is a dysfunction in one there is apt to be a correlative dysfunction in others.

<sup>1</sup> For an excellent discussion of the ductless glands, see Hoskins, *op. cit.*

The *thyroid gland* is located in the neck and plays a most important role in the regulation of metabolism. If an individual's thyroid gland is underactive (hypothyroidism), he tends to slow down both physically and mentally. Usually he puts on weight but in a way different from that accompanying pituitary deficiency. If the hypothyroidism occurs to a marked degree in a newborn child, the child becomes what is commonly known as a cretin, although true cretinism does not occur in this country.<sup>1</sup> This condition is more accurately referred to as myxedema and the victim presents a pitiful picture, with his grotesque appearance and low-grade intelligence.<sup>2</sup> In such cases, if treatment with thyroid gland substance or extract is begun early enough, almost or entirely normal physical and mental development may take place. If treatment ceases, the individual "backslides."

If the thyroid gland is overactive (hyperthyroidism), the individual tends to become more active. He loses weight. He becomes more excitable. Nervous tension increases. The pulse rate becomes more rapid. One writer compares the results of hyperthyroidism with opening the draft of a furnace.<sup>3</sup>

The *adrenal glands*, located near the kidneys, aid the individual in meeting an emergency or a crisis situation. They secrete adrenine, a hormone that enables the body more readily to draw upon reserve supplies of energy. If one's friend were pinned under a car after an accident, one might find that he could lift a greater weight than he thought possible. The emergency causes his adrenal glands to supercharge him, so to speak, with adrenine, and he draws upon reserve energy supplies.

If a person meets a situation that makes him intensely angry, his adrenal glands come into play and he becomes geared up to meet a crisis. He feels hot and looks flushed. He breathes more rapidly. His heart pounds. His digestive processes cease. He may turn on the person who caused the situation. If that individual is not present, the angry one may kick the furniture, pound his fist on the table, slam the door. He may feel better if he takes a vigorous walk, plays a strenuous game, or drives his car faster than usual. In a sense, he is chemically as well as psychologically angry, if we may use the terms as loosely as that.

<sup>1</sup> Hoskins *op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.



He is likely to remain angry until he has either rapidly or gradually used up the supercharge of adrenaline that his adrenal glands have poured into his blood stream.

To have this chemical change occur in the body and then to repress the expression of feeling or inhibit the muscular activity one is prepared for is roughly comparable to running an automobile with the brake on—it is hard on both motor and brake. This is one reason why continued worry so often has such serious effects.

This brief description of the action of the adrenal glands is not to be interpreted as meaning that emotions depend entirely upon gland secretions, for experimental animals can exhibit strong emotional reactions even though the adrenal glands have been completely removed. The glands supplement and accentuate the activities of the nervous system.<sup>1</sup> Neither is this statement to be interpreted as suggesting complete license in the expression of emotion or freedom from responsibility if one loses his self-control. A certain amount of repression is not only harmless but necessary in group living. In the long run, an individual can better control his emotions by changing his attitude toward the stimulus than by repressing the response. It is better, for example, to change one's attitude toward the things that make one angry than it is to try to repress the anger after one has become "stirred up." After one has *become* angry, he can control only his expression of anger although he may do something which enables him to get over his anger more quickly.

Another pair of glands the secretions of which play an extremely important role in making us what we are is the *sex glands* (gonads—testes in the male, ovaries in the female). Since we shall come back to them later when we discuss reproduction, we shall only mention them here in order to get a general picture of the part they play in producing the differences between men and women.

Usually only experienced horsemen are willing to ride stallions (normal males). Less expert horsemen ride mares (females) or geldings (males with sex glands removed). The stallion is a very spirited animal with a "mind of his own." He is not easily controlled. His behavior is somewhat unpredictable. He is likely to get into trouble if he goes near other horses, especially mares. The gelding tends to behave more like the mare than like the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

stallion. Both gelding and mare are more tractable, more easily controlled, more readily predictable.

To ride in a cart to which there was hitched a team of bulls would be almost suicidal. Not so with a team of oxen (males with sex glands removed). The difference between the behavior of the bull and that of the ox is so commonly understood that it has become proverbial—"like a bull in a china shop," "mad as a bull," "dumb as an ox."

A woman who entered a butcher shop to purchase a fowl for dinner and demanded a full-grown rooster would be considered anything but an intelligent consumer and efficient housewife unless the pinch of economic necessity forced her to so unwise a choice. What she does buy is a hen, because the meat is more tender and there is likely to be more fat. If she can afford it, she may buy a capon (male with sex glands removed) because the capon has the size of the rooster with the tenderness and fatness of the hen.

When by accident or for surgical reasons the sex glands are removed from a human male, profound changes occur. Such a person is termed a *eunuch*. If the person is young at the time, he fails at the age at which puberty (sexual maturity) normally occurs to develop many of the characteristics of normal men. Voice remains high-pitched. Beard and body hair do not appear in normal amount. Muscles have a tendency to be flabby and weight usually increases. The primary genital organs fail to develop normally and of course the person is sterile. Normal male aggressiveness often fails to appear. If the glands are removed later in life, masculine traits tend to change and characteristics such as those mentioned above appear. In addition, the sexual impulse and interest in the opposite sex decrease considerably or disappear entirely.<sup>1</sup> In short, the person tends to become "feminized"; or, perhaps more accurately, he tends to become something part way between masculine and feminine but not entirely either.

Equally profound changes occur when the ovaries are removed from females, who then tend to become "masculinized" or to fall part way between masculine and feminine. Suffice it to say here that the difference between the stallion and the gelding, the stallion and the mare; between the bull, the ox, and the cow; between

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 178-183.

the rooster, the hen, and the capon; between the normal man and the eunuch or the normal man and the normal woman is caused in large measure by the presence or absence of the hormones secreted by the sex glands.

Hormones are almost unbelievably potent chemicals. Picture a tank car holding 625 gallons of water. Line up such cars 200 to the mile and let them extend for 5,000 miles. It would take that much water to reduce one ounce of one of the pituitary hormones to the point where it would be undetectable. It would require enough water to fill 50 miles of such tanks to dilute one ounce of adrenine to the ineffective point. The total amount of thyroxine circulating in the normal body at any one time is only one-fourth of a grain—one-twentieth of an aspirin tablet. Three and one-half grains—roughly two-thirds of an aspirin tablet—suffice for an entire year. Yet that minute quantity of thyroxine spells the difference between the imbecility of the cretin and the intelligence of the normal person.<sup>1</sup> One of the hormones (theelin) secreted by the ovaries is so potent that, if women are as sensitive to it as experimental animals are, one ounce would be sufficient to evoke an appreciable reaction in every woman and girl in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

It is not difficult to understand, then, why we are what we are partly because of our glands. And apparently we live on a rather narrow margin. Let the secretions of these glands vary just a bit one way or the other, let the balance be disturbed only slightly, and almost revolutionary effects are produced.

There are also physiological functions, other than those regulated by the glands, which play a part in making us what we are. Allergies of one sort or another, the reaction of the body to foods and poisons, the effects of bacterial action, the utilization of vitamins, and numerous other factors make a contribution to the development of individual differences.

Some of the physiological factors, including those regulated by the glands, are sexually colored; others are nonsexually colored. In the first group are those that tend to produce the differences between men and women, that is, there are certain processes that are more typically feminine than masculine and vice versa. The processes controlled by the gonads are the most clear-cut example.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

On the other hand, allergies seem to be entirely individual. In short, then, we are what we are partly because of our physiological processes, some of which are sexually conditioned while others are not.

**Experience.** Another important factor in making us what we are and in making men and women different is experience. As with physiological processes, so with experience—some is sexually colored; some is not. From infancy boys and girls are subjected to a somewhat different educative process. Their games and toys are different and tend to reflect their future adult roles. The stories they read or hear read tend more and more as they get older to have a definite masculine or feminine coloring. The standards set for them by their parents and by society at large differ. There is a selection of experience so that different environmental factors act upon the two sexes. Each is encouraged to do certain things and prohibited, or at least strongly discouraged, from doing others. Each has restrictions on freedom but in different ways. Girls are given more protection, and they grow to expect it. Boys are allowed more independence, and they grow to take it for granted as a masculine prerogative.

The differences in standards of behavior set up by the group are expressed in exaggerated fashion in the old nursery rhyme: "What are little boys made of? Snips, and snails, and puppy-dog tails. And what are little girls made of? Sugar, and spice, and everything nice." "He's a real boy," says the proud father, implying that there is a standard of "boyiness" and that his son is living up to that standard. The half-shocked mother who says, "Boys will be boys," implies that being a boy is different from being a girl. The words *tomboy* and *sissy* show quite clearly that there are rather well-defined roles of behavior even for children and that deviation from those roles is not socially approved. In short, each sex tends to learn to act as it is expected to act.

Besides the sexually colored experience to which a person is subjected there are innumerable experiences that are entirely individual. They are so obvious as to need no further explanation; but they play an extremely ample role in making us what we are.

No one of these three types of factors—inborn traits, physiological processes, experience—is sufficient alone to determine individual or sex differences. They all react one upon the other,

making the individual as well as the group the product of nature plus nurture.

### POSSIBLE REACTIONS AND ATTITUDES

There are several possible attitudes that one may assume toward the differences between men and women. It is important to note, however, that one must assume some attitude; one cannot continue to exist without taking some stand, more or less consciously, on the fact that the human race is divided into two sexes.

**Denial.** One may attempt to ignore or deny the differences. The early feminist did this. She believed that there were no really important differences between men and women and that the apparent differences were the result of training. Why not, then, let women follow in men's footsteps? Why talk about things masculine and things feminine? Why should not men and women be duplicates of one another? The feminist made a worthy contribution to the raising of woman's social position and the achievement of long-needed rights and privileges; but she did overlook some fundamentals.

Many educators have ignored the differences between the sexes. In some colleges and universities, for example, the curriculum is one traditionally designed for men. They are really men's schools, which women are permitted to attend. Some of these schools make little or no allowance for the fact that the roles of the sexes will be different after graduation. Whether or not they should be different is beside the point; they are different. Difference of role is in a sense a sex difference and it makes for sexually colored experience. Such schools have fine departments to give vocational and cultural training to both sexes; but they too often neglect the girl who is to become wife-homemaker-mother. Training for her comparable in quality and extent to that provided for a vocation is all too frequently lacking. The great majority of women become homemakers who do not pursue a wage-earning career. Yet often there is an assumption that no difference exists between the needs and interests of men and the needs and interests of women; and the curriculum is designed for celibates.

Husbands who expect their wives to react as men, wives who are surprised when their husbands act in masculine fashion ignore

sex differences. Mothers who fail to realize that when sons marry they tend more than do daughters to drift away from the parental family and consequently chafe at the bit when the mother attempts to hold them close to her as if they were still boys; men who have no understanding of a woman's desire for motherhood; men and women who do not see that there are deep-set differences in attitude toward sexual experience both marital and premarital; the father who wanted a son and had a daughter but who tried to rear her as a son only to see her fall between two chairs instead of sitting on either—these and innumerable others ignore or deny that there are differences between men and women.

**“Masculine Protest.”** A second possible reaction is what Adler has termed the *masculine protest*. There are women who at some time during their lives have been made to feel inferior because they were female. They have, therefore, grown to resent the fact that they are women. Because they hate to be women, they wish they were men. Some of them strive in a way to be men.

On numerous occasions the writer has asked groups of girls these questions: How many of you are glad you are girls? How many of you would like to be men? In every group of any size there have been individuals who said they were sorry they were girls and wished they could be men. In one study the writer procured from college girls anonymous written replies to the question: Have you at any time during the past year wished that you were or could be a man? Of 393 girls 145 (37 per cent) answered in the affirmative. No doubt such girls confuse somewhat being men and having the privileges of men, for the reason most frequently given for wishing to be a man was that men have more freedom of activity than do women. The second most frequent reason was monthly periods. For many girls the wish was not very strong and they were aware of it only occasionally. There was scarcely a full-fledged “masculine protest.” Nevertheless, it is apparent that they are to some degree dissatisfied with their feminine role and status. One would not find a similar reaction in a group of boys or men who were asked whether they would like to be girls or women.

Women who exhibit the “masculine protest” ought to realize that they are beaten before the battle starts. At best a woman

can be only a second- or third-rate man, just as a man can be only a second- or third-rate woman. It would be much better and they would be much happier if they strove to be first-rate women instead of second-rate men. This statement is not to be interpreted as meaning that "woman's place is in the home" or that women are inferior to men. It is a simple recognition of difference without any implication of superiority or inferiority.

Women who exhibit the "masculine protest" to an extreme degree sometimes set out to surpass men in one way or another. Sometimes they try to demean men by becoming economic leeches. Sometimes they encourage affection of men, only to humiliate them, never forming enduring emotional attachments with any man.

There are instances in which men exhibit a "masculine protest." If a man is doubtful of his ability to fulfill the masculine role and to live up to the standards that the group has set for men, he may overstress the importance of being manly and may try to avoid being put to any sort of test that might possibly bring to light his supposed inadequacy.<sup>1</sup>

**Reform.** Another possible attitude toward sex differences is that of reform. This one overlaps with others; in fact, all these attitudes overlap. A person may recognize that there are sex differences and set out to do something about them. This is similar to but not identical with the attitude of the person who refuses to admit that there are really basic differences and sets out to change those superficial ones which seemingly exist.

**Conflict.** Another possible attitude or reaction is one of perpetual conflict. This is exhibited in the "masculine protest," but also in the person who recognizes the differences and takes his stand as defender of the fort in such a way that the sexes seem to be perennially at odds. They are considered lifelong antagonists, with no chance of ever combining forces in a cooperative venture.

**Adjustment.** The most intelligent attitude is one of mutual adjustment. The fact that men and women are different is recognized and accepted. Then let them adjust to each other in a way that promotes their mutual satisfaction in life and makes possible the fullest use of their resources. This does not mean

<sup>1</sup> ADLER, ALFRED, "What Life Should Mean to You," p. 276, Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1937.

that women must assume an inferior position and cater to men or become satellites to men. Inferiority implies not adjustment but rather conflict and competition.

We do not expect women to have the muscular strength of men. We make an intelligent adjustment to this difference. We do not expect men to sing soprano or women to sing bass. We make an intelligent adjustment to this difference, letting each do that for which he is better fitted and combining them for choral effects. A choir in which the women were trying to be like men would be an absurdity. One does not find women becoming neurotic or exhibiting some sort of "protest" because they cannot sing as low tones as men. No one considers the ability to sing soprano a mark of inferiority or the ability to sing bass a mark of superiority. They are just different. We make allowance for women's incapacity at the time of childbirth; business, the professions, the home, society in general make intelligent adjustments to this.

Why then can we not make equally intelligent adjustments to all sex differences—in fact, to all individual differences too? Whether these differences are inborn or acquired through training and experience is beside the point. If they exist, and we have assumed that they do, they are part of the world of reality in which we live, a world in which the greatest satisfaction comes through most intelligent adjustment. We live with people as they are, not as we should like them to be or as they may be years hence when society has become different from what it is at present.

This same need for adjustment exists in marriage. Women marry men; men marry women. Whether or not they have identical possibilities is an academic question. They are different both because they were born that way and because they have been made that way. So far as the individual and his marriage are concerned, the question of nature versus nurture is unimportant. He must adjust to the other person as that person is. Individual differences as well as sex differences must be taken into account.

Adjustment does not imply that one person shall change to suit the whims of the other, that one shall do all the adjusting, or that one shall be imposed upon by the other. It does not imply a condition of stagnation in which there is no change. It implies



merely that on the basis of the understanding of difference those things be done that increase the mutual satisfaction of the persons concerned.

### ARE MEN AND WOMEN EQUAL?

One often hears the questions: Are men and women equal? If not, which is inferior; which, superior? Taken as it stands, the first question is unanswerable. Equal in what respect? Two things cannot be just equal; they must be equal with respect to a given set of qualities. Even then, the answer depends in great part on the definition and connotation of "equal." Men and women are equal as to number of hands. They are unequal as to muscular strength. They are equal as to intelligence, though unequal as to brain size. Do they have equality as to opportunity for self-expression? Some would answer in the affirmative, others in the negative. Certainly they do not have identical opportunity for self-expression. Are the roles of husband and wife equally important? They are; but this does not make them interchangeable. When women talk of wanting equality with men, what they mean in most instances is equality of opportunity rather than identity of role or equality of responsibility.

To speak of one sex as being inferior to the other is nonsensical unless some standard of superiority-inferiority is set up. If a masculine standard is used, women become inferior by definition. If a feminine standard is used, the reverse is true. We have a strong traditional tendency to set up a masculine standard and, therefore, for centuries there have seemed to be more respects in which women were inferior to men than in which men were inferior to women.

Actually each sex should be judged in terms of its own functions, not in terms of the functions of the opposite sex. One sex may be considered superior to the other, not when it performs its own functions better than the other can perform them, but only when it can perform the functions of the other or common functions better than the other can perform them. If, for example, one were to compare the men and women engaged in a given occupation, one might set up a certain standard of proficiency in that occupation and determine whether one sex were superior or equal to the other. But to say that women are infe-

rior to men because there have been more male than female geniuses is absurd, because in fulfilling their traditional role women have had neither the need nor the opportunity for exhibiting the particular type of genius that men exhibit in science, invention, and the arts. It would be just as sensible to reverse the picture and say that men are inferior to women because throughout history men have been poorer mothers and homemakers.

**The sexes are complementary.** It is the works of my watch that move the hands and enable me to tell time. Are the works, therefore, more important than the case? "No," you will say, "the case is important too; in fact, works and case are equally important." Does this mean that if I had two works I would have a watch? Not at all, because, although equally important, they are neither identical nor interchangeable. Neither is superior, neither inferior. Each must be judged in terms of its own functions. Together they form a functioning unit.

So it is with men and women—together they form a functioning unit. Either alone is in a sense incomplete. They are complementary. Though separate with the possibility of independent existence, they are at the same time mutually dependent parts of a functioning whole. This complementariness is not 100 per cent complete and does not apply to all traits, functions, drives, or goals. When men and women engage in the same occupations or perform common functions, this complementary relationship may break down. The sexes are not complementary for such things as number of appendages, need for food, and so on, but in many other important respects they are.

To live together in a complementary relationship implies cooperation. It is a tragedy that so many young people are taught not to cooperate but to compete. If a woman enters the business or professional world, she must learn to compete with men. If she marries and becomes a homemaker, she needs not to compete but to cooperate. She and her husband need to establish not a competitive but a complementary relationship. The woman who leaves her temporary vocational pursuit when she marries but who carries with her the competitive attitude that she has learned and that she needed in her vocation, the married woman wage earner who cannot successfully exhibit a competitive spirit in the office but a cooperative spirit at home, the husband who carries competition into his relationship with his wife—these

persons prevent the development of that complementary relationship in marriage which spells mutual happiness.

To speak of the sexes as complementary does not suggest that one be a satellite to the other, that they be diametrically opposite in all traits, that one merely correct the deficiencies in the other's personality, or that the wife direct all her energy toward furthering the vocational success of her husband. Neither does it suggest the woman who stands in the background and lets her husband receive the applause, knowing all the while that it was she herself who did the work. It implies merely a recognition of difference between men and women and a utilization of this difference for the enhancement of common ends.

Benjamin Franklin compared a single man to the odd half of a pair of scissors.<sup>1</sup> In *Hiawatha* Longfellow likened a woman to the cord on a bow, bending the bow yet responding to it, "Useless each without the other."

Franklin's comparison may be oversimplified and Longfellow's may seem at first glance to relegate women to a position of useful inferiority. But each serves to clarify the point we have been trying to make, namely, that men and women are complementary, that together they form a functioning unit. In the typical American marriage a more or less normal man marries a more or less normal woman. The former becomes breadwinner while the latter becomes homemaker, and both become parents of the same children. In such a marriage biological and generally accepted roles are different, and mutual satisfaction is increased by cooperation and decreased by competition.

If this discussion of sex differences has seemed to the reader an ultraconservative defense of the *status quo*, it is unfortunate. The writer is aware of the sparsity of established fact in the study of these differences and also of the weaknesses in his argument. The fact remains, however, that we live in a world of reality, a world of the present and the immediate future, on which there rests the heavy hand of the past, a world in which tradition still holds sway and the mores exert a stronger influence than does the theorist, a world in which boys and girls are trained for

<sup>1</sup> ROSENBAUGH, A. S., "The All-embracing Dr. Franklin," pp. 19-20, quoted in Bernard Stern's "The Family Past and Present," p. 208, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1930. Reprinted with permission.

roles different but at the same time changing, a world in which new wine is being put into old bottles but in which too many bottles are being left empty, a world in which most men and women do marry and in which most married women are homemakers. To talk about what might be done if tradition and the mores were radically changed or what may come about by the year 2000 may be interesting mental gymnastics, but it does not help the young people of today to adjust to the inevitables of life or raise their marriages to a higher plane of mutual satisfaction.

#### THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN MODERN AMERICA

Much water has passed under the bridge since in 1863 a man wrote the following in a memory book presented to a young woman: "The mission of woman—to light her home with smiles and to strew flowers along her husband's path," and since in 1870 Queen Victoria wrote to a Mr. Martin: "The Queen is most anxious to enlist everyone who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of 'Woman's Rights,' with all its attendant horrors, on which her poor feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feeling and propriety. Lady . . . ought to get a *good whipping*. It is a subject which makes the Queen so furious that she cannot contain herself. God created men and women different—then let them remain each in their own position."<sup>1</sup> That the good queen was herself maintaining a status involving rights and privileges which her more humble sisters were in their lesser ways striving to attain and that she assumed that differences between men and women were all God-made and necessarily implied inferiority of status for the women does not alter the fact that she reflected the common attitude of the times and the fact that that attitude is now becoming passé.

It is not difficult to say that woman's social position has changed and still is changing. But to say whether it is becoming higher or lower is a more difficult assignment. More and more women are becoming wage earners both before and during marriage. This affects their relative position by giving them a type of independence that they did not have formerly. Technically, at least, a large proportion of the nation's wealth is "in the wife's name." Men are still expected to support their wives after the

<sup>1</sup> MARKUN, LEO, "Mrs. Grundy," p. 281, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1930. Reprinted with permission.

marriage tie is broken by divorce, but not to the same extent as formerly, for in many quarters there is a growing opposition to alimony.

Women have achieved suffrage. They have educational opportunities almost equal to those of men. Surely as a group they have made intelligent use of those opportunities. Men's attitude toward women and men's treatment of them are changing. Mothers have been somewhat emancipated from their children and are gradually being freed from bearing a greater number than they desire or can care for adequately.

With the development of modern warfare women have lost some of the inviolability in war which they formerly had. Men are still the chief participators in warfare, both as fighters and as victims, but women are playing a more extensive role, especially as victims.

Woman's social influence is increasing. Women are making progress in the professions but have not yet achieved a professional status equal to men's. They are also making progress in other occupations, but there is still a tendency for them to be given subsidiary jobs with lower salaries. Women still receive more social and legal protection than do men.

Both wage-earning women and housewives are gaining an increased amount of leisure time, but one wonders whether they have as yet learned to use it to best advantage, although progress is being made. Today women are thought of as individuals more than they ever were formerly.

Perhaps the most important change that has occurred—the one that in a way epitomizes the others and may well indicate an improvement of status—is increased freedom of choice. Women have more freedom of choice—in educational, social, and vocational matters; in choosing a mate; in getting married; in escaping an unhappy marriage; in bearing children—than they have ever had before. They are coming to play a larger part in determining their own destinies.

**The Relation of the Individual Woman to Woman's New Position.** There are a number of things that the individual modern woman must do if she is to adjust to this new and evolving set of life circumstances. She must in most instances prepare for a vocation. In earlier days she passed directly from her parental home to that of her husband. What she learned

about homemaking she learned chiefly from her mother. Now she usually prepares for at least a temporary vocation, a stopgap to bridge the transition from school and parental home to marriage. If she does not marry, she has greater vocational freedom of choice than women have ever before had. If her husband dies, she usually must earn her own living.

She must have a knowledge of life and social affairs, for she has increased independence and freedom of choice and decreased protection and direction. She takes a more extended part in community life.

She must know something about science and other fields of knowledge. Whether married or single, she must be more or less familiar with calories, atoms, vitamins, hormones, blood corpuscles, and a host of other things. She cannot read or converse intelligently without knowing the identity of Einstein, Freud, Madame Curie, and similar persons.

She must learn new techniques, for example, the technique of driving a car, the technique of consumption, the technique of applying modern psychology to child rearing.

She must understand herself, her resources, her goals, for she no longer has someone else to guide her or to dictate her mode of living; and traditional patterns are in a state of flux.

She must carefully study modern morals so that she does not confuse freedom with license and strive for a single standard, prematurely assuming that that standard should be the one traditionally set up by and for men.

She must understand men in a way different from formerly, for she is now on a different level with respect to them. She has more varied contacts with men, more freedom of choice in her associations. Men expect more from her. She is no longer an inferior, studying men in order to wheedle out of them the means to her own ends. She is a teammate in a new sense.

She must prepare for a new type of marriage relationship involving new attitudes of husband and wife toward each other, new expectations, new demands; but a relationship in which roles are no longer so clearly defined as formerly. The older type of marriage was one of give and take—the woman giving what the man demanded and taking what he was willing or forced to give; the man giving what tradition expected and taking what he could get. The new marriage also involves give and take—a

mutual relationship based on mutual adjustment. In earlier marriage the most prominent elements were support, protection, childbearing, homemaking. In modern marriage there is a tendency for these elements to assume a somewhat secondary position, while the most prominent element is personality, personal satisfactions, personality adjustment.

**What Men Might Do.** Factors irresistible as glaciers are at work to make a new woman out of the partially developed material passed on by tradition to the modern age. She is making increasingly better use of her resources. Her training is improving continually. Her social status is more nearly on a level with that of man. An assumption of woman's inferiority is as outmoded as a belief in evil spirits. Men's attitude toward women, though changing, tends to lag somewhat behind the modern scene; it is highly colored by tradition.

Men need to face the facts and exhibit some of the objectivity and logical thinking for which they have a reputation. They need to sweep their minds of cobwebs and look at women as they are, not as the voices of those long since dead have claimed that they are. Men, too, must prepare for a new type of marriage in which the economic and reproductive elements, though present, are overshadowed somewhat by personal relationships, the result being that wives are expecting more from husbands than support, protection, and fatherhood. They are expecting companionship and understanding of a type that history never before witnessed to any great extent, a type that challenges every man who desires success and satisfaction in marriage to study women in general and his wife in particular in a way that men have not been accustomed to thinking was their responsibility.

## CHAPTER II

### THE REASONS FOR MARRIAGE

In a tree outside your window a pair of birds are building a nest. Let us assume that you know by the banding on their legs that they are the same pair of birds that have nested in the same tree and reared a brood of little ones each spring for several years. Are those birds married? Since there has been neither license nor ceremony, is it common-law marriage?

Whatever the birds do, even to the complicated process of building a nest and caring for young, they do because of inborn behavior patterns, sometimes called "instincts." Their behavior is more or less automatic. Before they hatched from the egg, the determiners of that behavior were already present. A bird hatched in an incubator and kept isolated during its early life would at maturity exhibit the behavior of normal birds and could build a nest although it had never seen a nest before. The birds return together year after year for a similar reason—inborn behavior patterns.

Marriage, on the other hand, is not the product of inborn behavior patterns; it is an institution. It is a cluster of customs and group habits, of attitudes, ideas, and ideals, of social definitions and legal restrictions. One of its focal points is the "sex instinct"; but marriage is much more than that. It is much more than mating. If marriage and mating were the same, there could be no illegitimate children. The birds have mated, perhaps for life, as some animals do; but they are not married. Human beings mate but they *also* marry. In their marrying, "instinct" plays a relatively minor role. If, then, they do not marry "instinctively," why do they marry?

#### WHY PEOPLE MARRY

People marry for one of a number of reasons or for a combination of several of them. Such reasons as love, economic security, the desire for a home and children, emotional security,



parents' wishes, escape from loneliness or from a parental home situation, money, companionship, sexual attraction, protection, notoriety, social position and prestige, gratitude, pity, spite, adventure are obvious and need no further explanation.

Some couples are drawn together because they are deeply interested in the same things and this interest makes their relationship richer. But common interests, although important, are not alone a sufficient basis on which to build a successful marriage and are sometimes confused with interest in the other person. The following is a case in point. The boy was Jewish. The girl was gentile. Their parents objected to the marriage and both young people knew this. They were quite different as to cultural background, educational pursuits, and vocational choice. They had different circles of friends. The one thing they had in common was an interest in horses. There was nothing they liked better than to ride, talk, "eat, sleep, and live" horses. They wanted to marry, live on a ranch, and breed and train horses. Whether they were in love with each other or both were in love with horses was a pertinent question.

In some cases in which a person has been disappointed in love, had an engagement broken, or suffered some similar painful experience, he transfers his affection from the first love object to a second, feeling toward the second as he felt toward the first, even though the second may be a quite different sort of person and even though he has not known the second long enough really to be in love with that person. He makes a choice before he has sufficiently regained his emotional balance to make a wise one. This is marriage on the rebound.

There are still weddings based on necessity, "shotgun weddings," but they are not as common as formerly. There is a growing feeling against forcing a couple to marry, even though there may be illegitimate children. A forced marriage gives a child a legal father but cannot give him a loving father or the advantages of having happily married parents. Sometimes when there is neither love nor social pressure a man feels in honor bound to marry the mother of his child.

In some cases the more parents object to a marriage the more determined the young couple become and the more attractive they seem to each other. They marry not so much because they want to marry as to assert themselves.

Law and custom play a part. Our social life is organized in such a way that people are expected to marry. If they do not, society tends to wonder why; and they themselves may feel "different." Many a young woman marries because others in her circle of friends are marrying and she does not want to be the last one to do so, since the last one, unless definitely engaged, may seem the least attractive.

The law prescribes certain types of behavior for men and women and places restrictions upon them. Law does not force people to marry; but it does force them to marry if they want certain rights and privileges.

**The Primary Sex Complex.** Even in instances in which one reason seems dominant there are usually others that play a part. Most people marry on the basis of what Popenoe terms the "primary sex complex." This "complex" is composed of five elements: the biological mating urge, economic security and division of labor, sexually colored comradeship, nonsexually colored comradeship, and interest in home and children.

Popenoe goes so far as to say that a marriage to be successful must be based on all five of these elements. A marriage based on fewer than five is likely to fail. A marriage based on only one is almost sure to fail.<sup>1</sup>

**The "Fulfillment of Personality."** The statement is often made that people marry to "fulfill their personalities." The "fulfillment of personality" may be a result of marriage but it is scarcely a motivation for marriage. People do not have that as a goal in life; it is too abstract, too unconnected with emotions, too poorly defined. They work for more immediate, more concrete, more tangible goals. They eat because they are hungry, for instance, not to supply energy for future achievements. Getting energy is a result of eating, not a motivation for it. This is an oversimplified illustration. People do often work for goals more remote than the satisfaction of hunger. But there still is doubt that they marry for anything so intangible as "fulfillment of personality."

In the last analysis, people marry because marriage is the socially accepted pattern through which they can most satisfactorily achieve certain desired ends and satisfy certain innate or acquired urges, some of which may be achieved or satisfied to a

<sup>1</sup> POPENOE, PAUL, "The New Morality," A lecture.

degree without marriage. It is these desires and goals that may be thought of as the reasons for marriage.

### LOVE

If you were to ask a group of married people why they married, probably the majority of them would say, "Because we were in love." They "married for love." No doubt they would be at least partly correct. They did marry because they experienced a feeling that they interpreted as love. It is difficult, however, to state with any great degree of precision just what that feeling is. We use the term *love* in so many different senses. You say, for example, "I love my parents," "I love my fiancé," "I love animals," "I love nice clothes," "I just love to dance." It is obvious that you cannot love your mother in the same way that you "love" dancing. You do not have the same emotional experience with a new garment that you have with a fiancé.

We shall rule out the use of the term *love* unless there is a possibility of reciprocity. That is, it is correct to say, "I love dogs" because dogs can love in return; but it is not correct to say, "I love clothes" because there is no possibility of the clothes returning affection. Then we might qualify the term by such adjectives as filial, parental, conjugal, romantic; but that would still not explain precisely what we mean when we say we "marry for love," or we "fell in love." Furthermore, love means different things to different people, depending upon their background and experience, and it has varying meanings at different periods of life.

What distinguishes the love into which we "fall" from the other types of love mentioned is the more obvious sexual element. This is not the same as saying that love is entirely on a physical basis, for it is not. Sex is much more than physical; it ramifies all through an individual's life. But in romantic love, the love into which we "fall," the love that leads up to and over into marriage, there is a centering of attention on the other person as a focus of biological urges and a means of relief from biological tension. Such love, however, involves not only the desire for relief from tension but also the desire to increase it, so that unmarried lovers exhibit the strange paradox of enjoying nearness to each other, fondling each other, dreaming of each other, when these activities are both bitter and sweet at the same time.

The expression *fall in love* is an interesting sidelight on our attitude toward the experience. It gives the impression that love is a pit covered with branches to camouflage a trap set to catch the unwary, or that love sneaks up from behind and strikes suddenly, unexpectedly, and unpredictably. Of course, if a person "*falls in love*," he may easily convince himself that he is the victim of a fate over which he has no control and for the results of which he therefore has no responsibility.

We assume that we "fall in love" only with our "hearts" but that is not true. We do "fall in love" with our "hearts" but also, it is hoped, with our "heads." In addition, the process is colored by the traditions, customs, standards, ideas, and ideals of the group in which we live and out of which our attitudes spring.

It would be much better to say that we grow into love. That would be nearer the truth, but it sounds unromantic. Although one may fall precipitously into a condition of violent infatuation, it takes time for real love to develop. Love is a complex sentiment. It does not strike suddenly or fall unexpectedly like manna from heaven. It comes only when two individuals have reoriented their lives, each with the other as a new focal point.

**How Can One Tell Whether One Is Really in Love?** In the writer's experience in talking with numerous groups of young people of both sexes and various ages and in dealing with hundreds of college students, this is one of the most commonly asked questions and is practically sure to be brought up sooner or later in a discussion of premarital problems. Butterfield found that of 369 young people in eleven groups, approximately 40 per cent chose this question as one of the four they most wanted discussed, and in another series of 328 young people, 45 per cent were deeply interested in the question.<sup>1</sup> Such an interest indicates greater seriousness and greater caution than young people are often given credit for.

Occasionally, though, one finds a person who is afraid of the question. He feels that analysis will spoil romance and says that he prefers to fall in love and get married blindly. Let such a person realize that a great musician does not lose his appreciation

<sup>1</sup> BUTTERFIELD, OLIVER, "Love Problems of Adolescence," p. 87, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1939.

of music because he is more critical of it than is an untrained layman. The musician increases his appreciation through analysis. Let such a person remember that the proverbial ostrich has never had a reputation for being a happy bird. He does not increase his happiness by sticking his head into the sand and paying no attention to the environmental factors that may act upon him, never analyzing his own circumstances or situation. The old bird has only a false sense of security and the immediate satisfaction of seeming to solve his problem by refusing to face the circumstances which may eventually destroy him. Finally, let such a person realize that, if it is real love, it can stand the

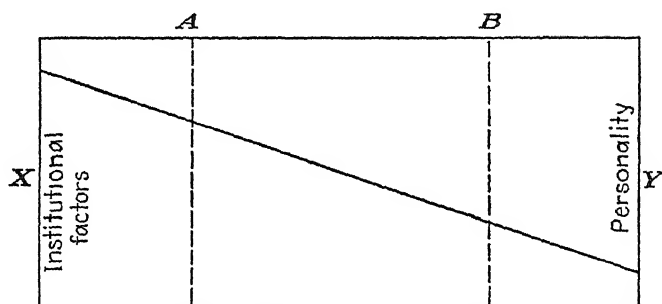


FIG. 1.—The change in the institutional and personality factors in the family.

test; if it is not, there is no better argument for beginning an analysis of it.

Although this question does cause some suffering and confusion on the part of young people, it is significant that the problem can arise. It shows, among other things, the increased freedom of choice that modern young people have and also, perhaps, that marriage is shifting to a new basis, which is composed less of institutional factors and more of personality adjustment.

With respect to its institutional and personality aspects American marriage seems to be passing through the transition represented diagrammatically in Fig. 1. Earlier in history the institutional aspects were more prominent. As marriage moves in time from *X* to *Y*, personality aspects tend to play a larger and larger role although at no time is either aspect completely lacking; the diagonal line does not extend to either corner. Marriage at period *A* (for example, in colonial times) was different from that at period *B* (for example, the present day). The institutional

and personality functions of husband and wife, especially of the latter, are changing. Some of these functions have been taken over by agencies outside the home, such as the factory, the school, the church. The result is that personality is coming to play a more and more ample role both in the reasons for marriage and in the success of marriage. The larger the part that personality plays, the wider are the possibilities of choice on the part of young people and the more difficult it becomes to find a suitable mate. Continually increasing responsibility falls on the shoulders of the couple concerned.

Furthermore, the tendency to marry varies somewhat with the aspects which seem most prominent. The greater the part played by personality and the smaller the part played by economic and other institutional factors, the easier it becomes, in a sense, to remain celibate.

There is no simple formula for determining the presence of love. One cannot say, " $a + b = c$ ; therefore, I am in love." Hence we have chosen to suggest a series of questions to aid in self-analysis. Some of these may overlap. They are for the person who has some doubts; they are not meant to undermine the confidence of anyone who feels sure. The reader may answer each question for himself. In most instances no one can tell him what the answer should be. He must determine the significance of an affirmative or a negative answer in his own case and weight each answer in the light of his own personality, the other person's personality, and the whole situation. Not all the questions necessarily apply to every person and there is no single criterion by which he can solve his problem. One might answer all of them and still be in doubt if in his case there were special considerations that are not included.

Above all, these questions are not to be scored as a test. Recently, for example, a list of similar queries appeared in a popular magazine. The questions were useful, but the author of the article suggested that each "yes" answer count  $5\frac{1}{2}$  and that the total score would indicate the degree of infatuation or love. Such a suggestion is absurd. Who can say that a "yes" answer means the same for everyone?

"No" answers are not necessarily undesirable in the light of a total situation. Being in love cannot be expressed by a mathematical average. Furthermore, a person cannot *make* himself

in love by "going through the motions" of the things suggested in the questions. Following, then, is the list of suggestions to aid the individual in analyzing himself to determine whether or not he is in love.

1. Do you like to be in the company of the other person? Do you prefer that person's company to any one else's?

2. Is he personally attractive to you? Physical attraction is natural and important but it is not the whole picture. Do you feel inclined to apologize to yourself or to others for his appearance, manners, ideas, conversation, language? Are you ever ashamed to have your friends meet him? Would you want him to be the father of your children?

3. How do you make up after a quarrel or difference? How do you get back to where you were previously? How do you go about reestablishing your relationship? Who takes the initiative? Do you harbor grudges? Do you make up only externally or internally as well, if we may express it thus?

4. As you look back over your relationship from the first meeting, how has it changed? Which of the following most nearly describes it and what does this mean in your case? (a) It started with dislike then gradually rose to greater attraction. (b) You knew him for some time before you were attracted to him. (c) It started with attraction, gradually rose, but has leveled off to form a plateau. Nothing has changed for some time. (d) It started with attraction, gradually rose, but has been declining for some time. (e) There have been ups and downs but pretty much on a level; the crests and troughs of the waves have been about the same height or depth. (f) There have been ups and downs but each crest is higher than the previous one and no trough is as low as the one before it. (g) It started with a great swish of enthusiasm, exploded in mid-air with spectacular effects, then sky-rocket like, it began to fall rapidly toward the earth a mass of cooling ashes. (h) It started with attraction and has become steadily richer and deeper. You can conceive of its continuing to do so indefinitely.

5. Do you have common interests and do you like to do things together?

6. Has time enough elapsed to tell? No one can say how much time should elapse. Nevertheless, the time element is important. For example, a couple became engaged after their fourth date and

married about eight months later. Perhaps true love has since developed but the girl's doubts shortly after the engagement showed rather clearly that she had confused infatuation and love and that not enough time had elapsed. The time to be considered is that between first meeting and the apparent falling in love as well as the time from first meeting to the present. The sooner after meeting that the couple consider themselves in love, the greater the probability of infatuation.

Many young people ask whether it is possible to be in love after a short acquaintance. It is possible; but one cannot be sure until he waits longer. Often what seems to be love proves later to have been something else. So many engagements are broken that one is forced to this conclusion: If one thinks he is in love after a brief acquaintance and later decides that he is not, it proves that he probably was not at the end of the short period. But if one thinks he is in love after a brief period and then still does after a longer time has elapsed, it proves that he probably was at the end of the brief period. He cannot be *sure* that he was in love after the brief period unless he waits longer than that time.

7. Is there present anything more than physical attraction? This is rather difficult to determine. The physical element may be absolutely as great in love as it is in infatuation, or greater; but in infatuation it is relatively greater. The more physical contact the couple have when they are together, the more the physical tends to overshadow other important elements and the more difficult it is to dissect each out and to ascertain the relative part played by each. If the couple can be together with no physical contact and yet not be bored, it may indicate that there is in their relationship something more than the physical. On the other hand, it may indicate that there is no physical attraction; and that fact is also important. How soon after your acquaintance began did you begin to be affectionate?

If you feel a very strong attraction toward the other person, become stirred up when you are together, dream about him constantly when you are separated, even though you have known him only a *very short* time, there is a possibility that the attraction is largely physical. At least the possibility is great enough to make postponement of marriage desirable until you can be more sure.

8. Do you love him as a person or do you like merely your feeling about him? Are you in love with a personality or "in



love with love"? The typical boy or girl early in adolescence is inclined to be attracted to persons of the opposite sex in general. Yesterday it was Tom, today it is Dick, tomorrow it may be Harry. Almost anyone passably acceptable will serve as the focal point for the new emotions that have sprung up within the child. At that stage the child is "in love with love." Some persons develop beyond this stage sooner than do others. Where do you stand? Are you still in the stage of being "in love with love"?

Infatuation is more likely to make one lose appetite, day-dream excessively, think of one's own misery, lose ambition. True love tends more to spur one on to better work, greater ambition, forgetfulness of self. There is, however, considerable overlapping and similarity in the early stages of love as compared with infatuation.

9. Are you attracted to him for what he is or for what you read into him? Have your feelings gone further than the facts warrant? Have you idealized him to the point of blindness, so that you pick out those of his traits that seem to fit your picture of an ideal mate and close your eyes to others? Pygmalionlike, the infatuated young person often "creates" in the other individual what he wishes to find there and then "falls in love" with his creation. The gods were kind to Pygmalion and brought his creation to life. They are not so considerate of the modern young person who marries not the individual he has created but the actual person. A certain amount of idealization may be desirable, for none of us can look at a love object with complete impersonality; but the idealization should be continually checked with reality and not depart so far from it that sight of the real person is lost and a true appraisal is impossible.

10. Does he wear well with you and your friends? You may see qualities in him that your friends do not appreciate or have not had opportunity to observe. On the other hand, your friends will probably be more objective and unbiased; they are not likely to be blind to his shortcomings. If, then, he does not wear well with your friends, this may indicate that you are infatuated.

11. Are you attracted to him for what he is or for what he can give you or do for you? Would you still feel that you loved him if he had no money, could buy you no gifts, could take you to few

places of amusement? Do you love him or his new car? Would you still love her if she had less attractive clothes?

12. Over what matters and how frequently do you have conflict? Is the conflict open or repressed? Is it superficial or fundamental? Has it to do with moral standards or the color of lipstick, with the use of money or a dance step? How important does this conflict seem to you and what does it mean? What would it mean as a daily diet in marriage?

13. Are you willing to make concessions or do you always expect the other person to do the pleasing, agreeing, and adjusting? If the latter is true, do you love the other person or yourself? Can you conceive of yourself as adjusting your own life in order to make the other person happy?

14. Do you have any doubts about your love? If you do, it may prove that you are not really in love. This is not necessarily so, for many people have doubts, especially at first. On the other hand, if you have no doubts it may prove either that you are really in love or that you have an attack of "puppy love." No one has fewer doubts than the person in the throes of the latter type of experience.

A certain amount of doubt while love is developing is not at all unusual. When, however, the question is whether or not to marry, the old adage "When in doubt, don't" is apropos. "Never marry if you can help it" is another saying that may be applied here. It suggests not that one shall deliberately avoid marriage, but that he shall refrain from marriage, if refraining is easy, and wait until he feels irresistibly drawn toward it. Refraining from marriage and refraining from love are not the same and should not be confused.

In connection with doubts, this question is often asked: Is it possible to love two persons at once? It may be possible theoretically; but the probability is that the person who asks the question does not love either individual enough to marry and it would be wise for him to wait until he is certain of his love for only one.

15. How do you weather a crisis together? How have you met illness and death in one family or the other? Has unemployment, maladjustment at home, unexpected separation, disappointment, or some similar crisis tended to drive you apart or to draw you closer together?

16. Do you feel that you want to love the other person or that you have to fight against it? What is the significance of either attitude to you? Is yours a case in which a strong physical attraction tends to draw you toward the other person while an intelligent appraisal of his personality makes you resist the physical appeal?

17. Do you feel that, if you "let yourself go" and loved the other person as much as you might, you would become submerged in his personality and lose your individuality?

18. Are you sufficient stimulus for each other when you are together or do you require external stimuli, such as movies, dancing, or a group of people, to prevent boredom?

19. Do you love him in your calmer moments or do you seem to love him only when your temperature and blood pressure are high and your heart is palpitating? Sometimes young people think that love will come suddenly as a great consuming flame or as a great wave that will sweep them off their feet. They wait for such an experience and assume that unless they have had it they are not in love.

20. In your mind how does he fare in competition with others? As you compare him with other men, is he always at the top of the list? Or are you constantly looking for "greener pastures"? Are you always proud of him? Do you admire him? Does almost anyone of the opposite sex attract you? Do you still like to flirt? How many other men seem to you like possible husbands? During his absence do you easily turn to another?

21. Are you mature enough to tell whether you are in love? Are you relatively mature and stable emotionally? Have you had enough experience? Have you known enough persons to be sure that this is *the* one?

22. How readily and how frequently do you publicize what ought to be private? For example, if without good reason or because of unusual circumstances you are in the habit of letting your friends read his letters, what does that indicate? Does it show that you love him or that you are infatuated and want a renewal of thrill? Does it show that you value the high estimate of your friends more than you value the special relationship between you and him, which is largely for you two only? True love puts the other person first. Have you forgotten the

embarrassment he would feel if he learned what you do? What would you conclude about his love for you if he showed your letters to his fraternity brothers? If a couple were very happily married and the husband were away on a business trip and the wife showed his letters to her friends, what would be your opinion of her? She might read parts of his letters to friends, but there would probably be other parts that she would feel were for her alone.

23. Do you need his physical, geographic presence to be enthusiastic about him? Or do you still love him when you are separated? Does your enthusiasm vary inversely as the distance between you—the greater the distance, the less, the enthusiasm; the less the distance, the greater the enthusiasm? Or does your enthusiasm vary directly as the distance between you? When you are separated do you idealize him and feel that you love him, only to become more critical when you are together? Or are you more enthusiastic when you are with him because of his physical presence and a tendency on your part to be blind to his faults, only to become more critical and less enthusiastic when you are separated and you can think more clearly? Or are you equally enthusiastic under all circumstances?

24. Do you feel that your relationship hangs on a very slender thread and could be easily broken?

25. Do you willingly permit him to date when you are separated for an extended period? If you do, it may mean that you care little about him or that you know him, trust him, and think of his pleasure before your own. If you do not, it may mean that you are afraid of losing him, that you are infatuated, that you think of your own feelings before you think of his.

26. Do you forgive, tolerate, accept, overlook, or resent his faults and shortcomings? Do you love him "faults and all," or are you holding yourself in check pending his reform?

27. What is the effect of separation after it is over? Take, for example, the girl who goes away to school in September and leaves a September boy on the station platform. In June she returns with a September anticipation, but because of her year's experience a June attitude, and finds a September boy waiting to greet her. Often such a couple find they are no longer in love as they had thought they were. "We felt like strangers," commented one such girl, "I didn't know what to say." Feeling

awkward and embarrassed, she had the impression that they would have to get acquainted all over again. If on her return the girl easily falls back into the habit patterns she has built up for her life at home, she may for a while still think she loves him. If she carries home her college habit patterns, the fact that the "love" has died is often quite apparent. In many cases, however, separation does not at all affect love, especially when both persons have grown in similar ways or not grown at all.

28. Have you seen him in enough different types of situations and observed enough different facets of his personality to tell? On the whole, marriages growing out of college courtships are more successful than marriages in general. Nevertheless, there are some limitations on college courtship especially in its early stages. These should be faced and taken into account. If you have seen him only at dances, movies, amusement centers, his fraternity house, in a car, and on campus, have you seen him in enough different types of situation to know him as he really is? Perhaps so, yet there are other important situations that might well be taken into account. What is he like with his family, when at work, in his home-town setting? Have you taken his vocational choice into consideration? Have you seen him when he is not "putting his best foot forward"? Do you know his family and home background? If not and they prove to be less than you hoped, will you still love him?

29. Do you see his faults *and* their significance? Or do you merely see his faults in a distant, detached way without realizing what those faults would mean in marriage? Do you only recognize them or do you also assimilate them into your thinking? In a typical case, a girl listed in conference a long series of serious faults that her "boy friend" exhibited. He disappointed her frequently. He often failed to come when he had promised to do so. He humiliated her before her friends and was rude to her in private. He felt she was inferior and told her so. He was stingy. On and on she went, cataloguing fault after fault. But he was handsome and she did think she loved him. After a few months, however, she began to see what those faults would mean in their daily life in marriage and she decided that what she had thought was love was really infatuation.

30. When you are with other men without his being present, do you think more or less of him both as to frequency and intensity?

31. If he has told you in no uncertain terms that he is sure he loves you and will love you forever, what part does this certainty play in making you feel that you love him? If she seems indifferent, has it caused you to confuse love with the "spirit of the chase"?

32. To what extent do you feel identified with him? Do you think of yourselves as a pair or as isolated individuals? When others praise or blame him, do you feel it too? How much do you share experiences? Can you see him fitting into your scheme of life for the future? Can you picture yourselves together day in and day out for the rest of your lives? How much does he seem a mooring post for you emotionally? Does your life seem to center around him, his around you, neither, or both? How much of a feeling of security does contemplation of your relationship give you?

33. How much do you think of his welfare and happiness? Two college students were engaged to be married. The boy was studying medicine and had a very heavy schedule. In addition, he was working his way through school. At the same time the girl insisted on his coming to see her or to take her out almost every night. To please her he was doing it. Finally, however, he began to break under the strain of fatigue and continual worry about money and grades. It was apparent that the girl was not thinking of her fiancé's welfare and there is reason to doubt that she really loved him as much as she thought.

34. Is there anything or anybody in life that you consider more valuable to you than this other person or that you love more than you love him? If so, what or who is it and what does that fact mean to you?

35. What has been your reaction to these questions? Have you found it difficult to be honest with yourself? Have you been evasive anywhere? Have you tended to rationalize any of your answers? Have you had a tendency to dismiss the use of such analysis on the assumption that questions cannot help you anyway? Have the questions put you on the defensive, as if you were afraid they would undermine something not fully secure?

The reader may wonder whether there can be any true love. Doubts about his own feeling may have increased. This may be temporarily confusing but it is not dangerous. Let him remember that a love that cannot stand the test of thirty-five questions

could never stand the test of thirty-five years of marriage or, for that matter, even three years of marriage.

**Suggestions for Studying While in Love.** A very pertinent practical question frequently asked by serious students who find that being in the throes of love or infatuation has a tendency to make concentration on schoolwork difficult is this: How can I be in love and at the same time keep up my grades? A few possible aids follow.

1. Put his or her picture where you cannot see it from your desk. Leave it there; do not put it where you will have to move it when you begin to study.

2. When sitting at your desk, study only. If you feel irresistibly impelled to dream, leave your desk, sit in another chair, take a walk. Never dream at your desk. Be sure that *desk* and *study* are always associated in your mind. Never break the habit even for a short period, except when writing letters.

3. If in trying to think through your problems of separation, loneliness, postponement of marriage, or difficulty in concentrating on studies you feel yourself becoming confused or depressed, stop trying to think your way out; *do* something, something that will divert your attention until the mood passes. Play some active game, take a hike, go to the movies, spend some time on your hobby. It is helpful to keep up an interest in a variety of activities; but do not force an artificial interest or participate to the saturation point, so that boredom or fatigue sets in.

4. Date some and participate in the activities of mixed groups.

5. Avoid fatigue if possible. At least do not try to think through your problem when you are very tired.

6. If it seems to you necessary to talk to someone and you think that this will make you feel better, have a talk with some older person whom you like and in whom you have confidence. Do not talk to another student who is in the same plight as yourself and with whom you exchange condolences until you sink deeper into your depression.

7. Try a study schedule, at least for a short period, to see if you are a person who can use one to advantage.

8. Make a list of all the things you have to do. List them in the order in which you plan to do them. Then concentrate upon one at a time and try to forget the rest temporarily. Often a person who is trying to keep his emotions under control so that he

can do a normal amount of academic work has a tendency to think of it all at once. He feels overwhelmed and does not know where to start, so he starts nowhere and gets further and further behind.

9. Unless the circumstances are such that dreaming is acceptable, try to avoid those stimuli which tend to start it, for example, certain types of music which have a particular effect on you.

10. Do not try to think through your problems while lying in bed, unless you are sure you can think clearly while doing so. You are probably accustomed to thinking while vertical or partly so (standing or sitting). You are probably not accustomed to thinking clearly while horizontal. If you cannot sleep when you go to bed, get up and read, take a walk, or sit in a chair; do not try to think in bed, only to become more confused.

11. Determine by observation and experiment what is the best time to write letters. If, when you write early in the day, you carry over your mood and then find difficulty in studying, perhaps it would be better to write just before going to bed. If, however, by writing you find emotional release, then it might be well to write early.

12. Do not reread letters just before beginning to study.

13. If the two of you are in different schools, try to think of your present temporary separation as part of a larger picture.

14. Try working to please him. Work to make him proud of you. He cannot be proud of someone who, because she cannot control her emotions, does poorly in school.

15. Avoid the first slight slips into dreaming when you are trying to concentrate. Do not let yourself stop in the middle of a chapter to think just a moment about him; it may be the beginning of the end as far as that evening's work is concerned.

16. Remember that the more you dream, the longer will seem the time until you can be together.

17. Some students find it useful to employ special devices that are associated with study. Some use "thinking caps," special head covering worn only when studying. Some wear special garments; for instance, they always put on the same house robe when studying and wear that robe only for study.

**Love at First Sight.** The question of whether or not there can be love at first sight is often brought up in discussion groups. It would be unwise to say dogmatically that there could not be love at first sight, but we can be fairly sure that there seldom is.



If a boy had in mind a conception of an ideal girl and then he met a girl who exactly fitted the pattern, there might be love at first sight. Even in such a case, however, one might ask, "How did he know at their first meeting that she would exactly fit the pattern?" To love a person one must know him. What usually happens in "love at first sight" is that the couple are strongly attracted to each other, perhaps even infatuated, from the very beginning. Then this strong attraction gradually develops into love without any break in the process. It seems as if it were love at first sight; but that does not prove that it was. Often the question is asked by someone who has experienced such strong attraction and wants confirmation of his hope that it may be love and rationalization for a premature decision to that effect.

**Is There Only One Person You Might Love?** There are individuals who sincerely believe that somewhere in the world is *the* one, the only person with whom they could fall in love and with whom they could find happiness. They are depending upon a kind fate, plus a certain amount of seeking on their own part, to bring the two predestined lovers together. This is a very romantic conception but it cannot be squared with the facts. The assumption that only people suited to each other will fall in love is false. Since Americans are born at the rate of about one every fifteen seconds, it would be somewhat difficult to keep one's seeking abreast of the population.

What happens to make it seem as if the theory were true is probably this. Two persons have certain ideas concerning an ideal mate. They meet and fall in love. Then each revamps his ideal to fit the other person, and consequently each has fallen in love with the ideal mate. But before that happened, they might just as readily have fallen in love with any one of a number of persons. After the ideals have been revamped and centered around a given individual, however, this fact colors their attitude toward other persons and might make it impossible to love anyone else.

### IS MARRIAGE NORMAL?

Statistically marriage is normal; approximately 90 per cent of the persons who live to be fifty or older eventually marry.<sup>1</sup> In a sense therefore marriage is normal and the minority who never marry are abnormal. On the other hand, if at a given time every-

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census, 1930, Population, II, p. 838.

one of fifty or older in this country were married, that would be an abnormal situation. So we may think of a certain amount of singleness as normal also. Thinking in terms of the whole group, the normal is variation. Therefore, we are not justified in thinking of every individual who does not marry as being abnormal in the sense of necessarily having "something wrong with him," since it is the normal thing to expect some persons not to marry.

This may seem somewhat confusing but no more so than the common careless usages of the term "normal." The point we wish to emphasize is this: most people marry and marriage is normal, but there is not necessarily anything the matter with the person who remains celibate. Yet often in every day life that person must justify his choice and sometimes he himself comes to think of his own state as one which brands him as "different" or "peculiar."

**The Marriage Rate. How Many Marry?** The marriage rate (the number per 1,000 population who marry in a given year) fluctuates from year to year. It decreases during a depression, for instance, and tends to increase at the beginning of a war. When the yearly fluctuations are disregarded and the long-time trend is considered, the rate has changed only slightly in the last half century. Marriage is at least as popular today as it has been at any time during that period; and there is no indication that its popularity will decrease in the immediate future.

There are alarmists and theorists who are wondering whether marriage will not soon become passé and something like free love take its place. Marriage is changing; it is going through a period of transition. But there is no reason to fear that it is becoming old-fashioned or obsolete. It is too ancient an institution. It has been too long tested and tried. No better way has yet been found to give to society what marriage contributes. If it needs improvement, well and good. But there is little use in suggesting substitutes so contrary to our mores that they are not acceptable and therefore of no value in improving the present situation.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PERMANENTLY UNMARRIED

Since 10 per cent of the population never marry and this amount of nonmarriage is a normal expectation in the group, and since the individual considers the two alternatives of marriage and nonmarriage before choosing either, the unmarried, the reasons for their remaining single, and the problems they face are integral parts of the composite whole.

#### REASONS FOR NOT MARRYING

**Career Interest.** This reason is found more commonly among women but is not unknown among men. If an individual has a greater interest in a career than in marriage or if he feels that career and marriage cannot be successfully combined, he may remain single. The priesthood is a case in point.

**Lack of Opportunity.** *Disproportion of the Sexes.* In the United States, there are more men than women. Considering only those persons fifteen years of age or older, there was in 1930 an excess of more than a million men when both married and single were included, an excess of more than three and a half million men when only the single were considered. This greater disparity among the unmarried is due to the fact that men tend to marry at later ages than do women.<sup>1</sup> In only a few states were there more women than men<sup>2</sup> and in only two (Massachusetts and Rhode Island) were there more women than men who had never married.<sup>3</sup>

It is obvious that in the last analysis some persons must remain single because there is no one for them to marry. However, the disproportion of the sexes does not operate alone to prevent marriage. Probably other factors, such as lack of interest in marriage and unattractiveness, play a part in sifting

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census, 1930, Population, II, p. 837.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 852.

the population, so that the statistical excess includes many persons otherwise unlikely to marry.

*Responsibilities Which Prevent the Meeting of Eligible Mates.* For example, the burden of caring for a family of younger children may prevent a girl from meeting men; the care of invalid parents may do so.

*Occupation.* The missionary, the explorer, the herder, a person whose occupation requires nightwork, and many others may find that their vocations tend to prevent their meeting eligible mates.

A group of one hundred educated women drew up a list of occupations open to college women and ranked them in the order of their "marriageability," putting first that occupation in which a girl is most likely to meet eligible men and last the one in which she has least likelihood of meeting them. The list is as follows: secretarial work, dramatics, bookkeeping, stenography, journalism, selling (insurance, in stores, etc.), hostess (hotel or restaurant), buyer for large firm, nursing, law, teaching, dietetics, library work, social work, medicine.<sup>1</sup> This represents the opinions of only a hundred women and they may be putting the cart before the horse, since certain vocations may tend to attract girls not interested in marriage. Nevertheless, it is enough to indicate that different occupations present varying opportunities for meeting eligible mates.

*The Type of Community in Which One Lives.* The college graduate who returns to a small town in an isolated region may have difficulty in finding a suitable mate. The schoolteacher in a rural district faces not only occupational but also community obstacles in this respect, while in a large city it is often difficult to make contacts.

*Unattractiveness.* There are persons who fail to marry because they are not attractive to the opposite sex, at least, not to those of a type that they would be willing to marry.

*Ignorance of Means of Approaching the Opposite Sex and Getting Acquainted.* We shall return to this topic later.

*Open Aggression on the Part of Women.* There are some women who do not marry because they are too anxious. They pursue men so obviously that men avoid them. The woman

<sup>1</sup> POPENOE, PAUL, How Can Young People Get Acquainted? *Journal of Social Hygiene*, XVIII, No. 4, April, 1932, pp. 218-224.

approaching thirty, for example, who wishes to marry but sees no immediate prospect of it sometimes becomes panicky. She develops a "now or never" attitude and may be trapped in a vicious circle. The more panicky she becomes, the harder she tries; and the harder she tries, the more she repels men.

*Too Long Delay in Earlier Years.* Men tend to marry women younger than themselves. If a woman becomes so absorbed in her vocation or her vocational preparation, if she is so popular when she is younger that she deludes herself into thinking she will always remain that way and hesitates to commit herself to one man, she may postpone her decision so long that the men she knows are married, not interested, or not eligible. If a man thinks that marriage means the end of fun and romance in life, or if he hesitates to marry until he has a large income, if he postpones marriage so long that he grows accustomed to his single life and develops habit patterns not easily readjusted, then he too may find, when he decides to marry, that it is too late. This discussion is not intended as an argument for too early marriage or for hasty marriage, however.

**Lack of Interest in Marriage, Home Life, and the Opposite Sex.** It is conceivable that there may be persons who lack interest in marriage, although it need not be assumed that there is anything peculiar about them. There are also other persons, and *the two types should never be confused*, who lack interest in marriage because they have stronger leanings toward members of their own sex than toward persons of the opposite sex.

**Illness or Physical Malformation.** Persons who are aware that they may be carrying inheritable defects which, although they are not observable in themselves, could be transmitted to their children sometimes hesitate to marry. Or one person may hesitate to marry another who is the carrier of the defect. For example, a student postponed a decision on marriage until she could be sure that the emotional disorder that her fiancé's sister exhibited was not of an inheritable type that he might be carrying and might pass on to their children.

**Distorted Ideas.** A person who feels that he must reform the world single-handed and that marriage would be an encumbrance to him, or who believes that he must mortify the flesh for the glorification of the spirit will probably remain celibate. A woman who believes that all men are beasts or a man who thinks

that all the world's ills may be attributed to women may avoid marriage.

If a person has ideals so unattainable that he seeks a perfect mate and refuses to marry until he finds one, the result is rather apparent, for there is no such thing as a perfect mate. The individual who will not marry unless his marriage can be perfect and who sees that even in the best marriages within his acquaintance there are imperfections is not likely voluntarily to become involved in marriage.

If a girl feels that by marrying she will submerge her personality in that of her husband or that she will become a satellite revolving around her brilliant mate and shining only by reflected light, she may shun such an existence.

"Single blessedness" is a commonly used phrase reflecting an attitude that leads some people to avoid marriage. Many unhappily married persons are the victims of what Frederick Knight has termed the "old oaken bucket delusion." The old oaken bucket was covered with romance, but it was also covered with moss and all too often with ice. On a sultry summer day to drink the cool, clear water that it contained was a joy. Trudging through the snow on wintry mornings to get the water, which had to be heated over a wood fire before it could be used, may be cherished as a memory perhaps, but it scarcely counts as a joyful experience. Discontented, disappointed, unsuccessful people, persons subject to this delusion, tend to glorify the past. They distort the past and are governed by it. They think of it as the golden age which they are reluctant to leave and to which they would gladly return. They remember only those parts of the past that are pleasant to remember; they forget the unpleasant ones. If singleness is so blessed, why are so many young people so eager to leave it? To them singleness is anything but blessed; it is a state unpleasantly prolonged and filled with stress and strain, doubt and confusion.

The married person who longs for "single blessedness" can never again be single in the sense that he was before marriage. Marriage is part of him. He can never really return to the past, even though he is divorced and as fully as possible adjusted to the divorce. There is also an age factor involved. What such an individual wants may or may not be singleness. He wants to escape the unpleasant aspects of his present situation. He

forgets, however, that when he was single he wanted to escape that and therefore he married. He wants what he conceives to be the advantages of singleness, forgetting its disadvantages and problems. He may not want singleness as a whole but only with respect to the irksome elements in his marriage. Sometimes he overlooks the pleasant aspects of his present state. It is from such mental processes that the common conception of "single blessedness" has sprung.

Older persons often say to younger ones, "Have fun while you're young and single and while you still can. One of these days you'll get married and then . . . ." That is the voice of dissatisfaction with marriage. The voice of satisfaction, the happily married person, says to unmarried youth, "Of course, you have a certain type of happiness and you have lack of responsibility; but you don't know what real happiness is." The reader would not readily return to the age of ten if he could remember what he was like at that time. To be a "child again just for tonight" would be a harrowing experience, even if it did afford escape from adult problems—if it meant absence of adult satisfactions, as well. The happily married person would not give up the love he knows, the sense of achievement he feels, the awareness of building something for which he had long planned and hoped and striven, the security he experiences, in exchange for the uncertainty, confusion, and emotional tumultuousness of youth. He knows that his wedding was not the "beginning of the end" but the doorway to the best part of life.

This is all very optimistic in an age when more marriages are terminating in divorce than ever before in our history. But one can with assurance be optimistic about young people who make the most of their resources and who believe that the best part of life is not over at twenty.

In view of this discussion, the student whose parents have told him to have a good time while young and to postpone marriage for a while should not leap to the conclusion that they are unhappy in their marriage. In many cases all that they aim to do is to apply brakes to the child's possible inclination to marry before he is ready for it and to lengthen his period of preparation both for marriage and for later life.

The "Phantom Lover." In some cases when a sweetheart or a fiancé dies, the other person remains "true to the memory" of

the deceased, idealizes him to such an extent that no living person could possibly reach the ideal and compete with the deceased one, and remains in love with an individual who is to a considerable extent the product of the living lover's imagination. Such an idealized individual is termed a "phantom lover."

The loved one need not have died, however, to become idealized to the point of becoming a "phantom lover." Consider the case of a twenty-two year old girl who at the time of the World War fell in love with a young man two years her senior whom she had known for some time but who did not return her love. The man entered the service and after the war settled in another city. The girl remained in her home town and made a career for herself. They saw each other only rarely and did not correspond. The man never married because he had no desire to do so. During all these years, however, the girl has remained true to the love that began during the war. She has never married. She has idealized this man far beyond reality and she could not be happy with him as her husband. Her life has been cramped, miserable, and frustrated. She has for more than twenty years been in love with a "phantom lover."

**Disappointment in Love.** This may result in the "phantom lover," but it may also result in a bitterness or discouragement that militates against marriage.

**Parents.** Some persons remain single because parents prohibit marriage at any time or because they prohibit marriage to a particular individual and the son or daughter never desires marriage with anyone else.

Care or support of parents sometimes prevents marriage. The individual feels that, since his parents have done so much for him, he cannot desert them in their time of need. For them he is willing to sacrifice even his own happiness. Occasionally one finds a parent who feigns illness or is subject to attacks of hysterical illness (illness that has physical symptoms but an emotional basis) in order to dominate the child and prevent his marriage.

It seems unjust to expect two generations to live for one. Parents who accept what their own parents did for them and also expect their children to sacrifice their lives for them are asking more than can be provided without exorbitant cost. Usually children outlive parents. When those children sacrifice their happiness in marriage for the parents, and then the parents



die while the children are in the prime of life, who is to live for the children? They are left lonely and often poorly adjusted.

When a mother expects a child to devote his life to her, she is assuming a bargain in which the child had no free choice. She assumes that because she bore the child and cared for him, the child is under obligation. The child did not ask to be born; he did not agree to the bargain. It is good to recognize that one owes one's mother a great deal and to be willing to do as much for her as is reasonable. One cannot repay his mother by cramping his own life to give her a few years of care and material support. One can repay his mother only by making the most of his own life and becoming what in her most selfless moments she would have him become. Love for parents and care for them are commendable and praiseworthy; but they are good only so long as they do not prevent the normal development and adjustment of the child.

*Parent fixation* is another factor preventing marriage in some instances. It often plays a part in the filial "devotion" explained above. We shall return to this matter of fixation when we discuss emotional maturity. At this point a brief explanation will suffice. Every child goes through a stage in his development when his first love is his mother or father. If he fails to develop beyond this stage, if his emotional growth becomes fixated at an immature level, he becomes the victim of parent fixation and he cannot experience a normal love for a person of his own age.

A man with a mother fixation may not marry because he cannot bear to have another woman take first place in his life, that is, take the place of his mother. He may marry a very young woman who will seem like a child in his family and will not disturb his attachment to his mother. Or he may marry a woman who will be more like a mother than like a wife to him. If he does marry and his mother fixation remains intact and his wife cannot accept the role that she must play, his marriage is put on a precarious footing and may fail. No one is ready for marriage who cannot put his spouse before his parents, no matter how much he may love the latter.

**Fear.** *Fear of sex* is common, especially but not exclusively among women. Fear of sex may be due to early conditioning, that is, early experience or teaching that makes sex seem unclean, repulsive, or sinful. If a girl has had an upsetting experi-

ence, such as an attack, if her parents made much ado over her naïve and sincere questions about childbirth, if she was not prepared for her first menstruation, if a child is told that masturbation will be followed by horrible consequences, if a mother has had an unhappy marriage and continually tells her young daughter to remain single, such a child may grow to fear sex.

Frequently Christian teachings are distorted so that sex is made to seem sinful and unclean. As far as can be discovered Jesus had a well-balanced attitude toward sex. A frustrated, embittered, or fanatical individual would not have been so popular and had so many normal contacts as Jesus had. He must have been a welcome guest in many a home, for so far as we know, He did not work during the three years of His public ministry. Children were drawn to Him. He had numerous women friends. Martha and Mary were among those most devoted. He did not hesitate to talk to the Samaritan woman at the well. When the woman caught in adultery was brought to Him as a test case, He showed his understanding of human impulses. Although He did not condone what she had done, neither did He condemn her. His men friends gave up their homes and families to be with Him. Some laid down their lives for His sake. He was a frequent guest at social gatherings, so frequent that the religionists of the day criticized Him. He was invited to weddings. To Him marriage was a value of first importance. He said, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" and "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be one flesh." What He taught about divorce must be interpreted in the light of the times. His parables and figures of speech show clearly how He felt the presence of God in things natural. His teachings concerning the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God, riches, one's family—in fact, all human desires and experiences—show that to Him the most important thing in life was a certain attitude, that one's attitude could make things right or wrong, good or bad, clean or unclean. Such an individual did not think of sex as something in itself unclean or sinful.

On the other hand, Paul, the great missionary, was somewhat different from Jesus in his attitude toward sex and marriage. Either Paul was a bit disgruntled and disappointed or else he made what he considered the best adjustment he knew to the

conditions he found and to the circumstances that developed in the churches he established. Furthermore, when he started preaching, he expected the early return of Jesus. This anticipation made many other things seem temporary and unimportant. Paul knew that human beings had strong impulses; but instead of understanding them as Jesus did, he wished that they did not exist and could in some way be bridled. If they could not be repressed, then of course some practical way to satisfy them had to be worked out. In his first letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. 7: 8-9) he said, "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." He meant that if natural impulses demand expression, it is better to marry than to have them beating at the gates, but that this is less desirable than celibacy. This implies that the natural impulses are regrettable and that marriage is a secondary value, the lesser of two evils, in a sense. Paul's attitude toward women was that they were inferior and should be submissive. He wrote: "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands . . . for the husband is the head of the wife." (Eph. 5: 22-23). He said wives should be in subjection to husbands (I Pet. 3: 1) and termed a wife a "weaker vessel" (I Pet. 3: 7). He felt that women should not speak in church gatherings, that if they wanted to learn something they should ask their husbands at home (I Cor. 14: 34-35).

To a considerable degree we have inherited out ancestors' attitude toward sex. They evolved their point of view from Paul's teachings more than from those of Jesus. Insofar as we interpret sex as sinful and unclean we are expressing a Pauline rather than a Christian (Christ-ian) attitude.

Many young women and some young men fear sex because of misinformation or lack of information. When students can get part way through college or can even graduate with distorted notions of sex and without knowing the anatomy or functions of their own bodily organs, one can readily understand how much ignorance of sex might be found in the population as a whole. Among students much misinformation is spread through spontaneous discussion groups. Uninformed students should remember that in these "dormitory discussions" those who know the least are often inclined to say the most. Some students exag-

gerate or even fabricate stories in order to impress or shock others. Many things said in these discussions should be taken "with a grain of salt" and some things should not be seriously considered at all unless checked with a reliable book or talked over with a person informed on such topics.

*Fear of uncertainty* is not unusual. Marriage does involve a chance element, an element of uncertainty. It is not possible to predict in advance exactly how a marriage will work out. If an individual has evolved a fairly satisfactory adjustment to the *status quo*, he may hesitate to leave it to plunge into something untried and, to a degree, uncertain.

All life is permeated with a chance element. When you enroll in college there is a chance that you will fail. With the best of training people fail in vocations. Each time you ride in an automobile you assume a risk. In mingling with people you take a chance on contracting a contagious disease. Even in walking across the room you run the risk of falling, and that risk is increased when you go up or down stairs. You do not become long-faced and fearful because life contains a chance element. It would be just as logical to lie in bed for the rest of your life to avoid taking chances as it is to avoid marriage because in marriage there is an element of uncertainty. The logical thing is to reduce the chance element in life by the use of intelligence. By careful choice and intelligent application one may reduce the chance of failing in his vocation. By careful driving one reduces the risk of accident. By lifting one's feet one reduces the risk of falling on the stairs. By intelligent choice and adjustment one may also reduce the element of uncertainty in marriage.

*Fear of the opposite sex* may be due to ignorance, distorted information, or unfortunate experience early in life. For similar reasons a person may develop a *fear of marriage*, the unfortunate experience in some cases being the parents' marriage. In a case such as the following both these fears are exhibited.

Two university students in their early twenties are engaged. They have known each other for several years and are sincerely in love. The girl has a healthy attitude toward sex but is afraid to marry. Her parents are happily married and she loves them both. Several years ago her father told her that on one occasion early in his own marriage he had had an intimate experience

and he regretted it. Hearing about it was a shock to the daughter. She was disillusioned and concluded that, if a man as fine as her father could not be trusted, no man could be trusted. Her fears have been increased by tales she has heard from other girls. Some of her friends who are enthusiastic about men and marriage have told her she is "queer." This worries her; she wonders whether she really is peculiar. She looks for evidence of masculine infidelity and naturally finds it since marital unfaithfulness is more conspicuous than faithfulness. When she learns of husbands who seem to be monogamous, she suspects that some of the facts are being concealed. She has told her fiancé of her fear and together they are trying to overcome it.

There is also *fear that the other person may not be adequate* or may not "measure up." He may have a physical defect or a personality quirk that would seem to put marriage to him on a precarious basis.

Finally, there is *fear of one's own abilities and capacities*. If an individual feels inferior, if he feels that he may not be able to reach the standard set for a marriage partner, he may hesitate to marry. Such an individual sometimes becomes a "Don Juan." To the poet, Don Juan was the great lover who captivated feminine hearts wherever he went. To the psychologist, Don Juan is often the fearful lover, the lover who feels inferior and fears his own abilities. Therefore, in order to prove his adequacy to himself and to others he must make repeated conquests but no permanent attachments.

**Falling in Love with a Married Person.** This experience prevents marriage in most cases. In some instances such a love is bona fide; in others a girl falls in love with a married man because he is "safer." If she is afraid of marriage, falling in love with a single man may result in a chain of developments leading to the very thing she wants to avoid. By falling in love with a married man she may have the love experience without any danger of its leading to the altar.

#### COMPENSATIONS FOR NOT MARRYING

There are both compensations and problems involved in remaining single, just as there are advantages and disadvantages in marrying. Let us consider the compensations first.

In one sense the single person does not "put all his eggs into one basket"; in another sense he does. He does not build his

life around another person, running the risk of having the bottom drop out of his world if that other person dies or disappoints him. On the other hand, in depending for his happiness upon himself rather than on himself plus another person, he misses the rich contribution that the other person may make.

It is difficult to say whether married or single persons have more freedom. In a way one neither gains nor loses freedom in marrying; he merely changes its form. The unmarried are freer to carry out their own wills without consideration of someone else. They have greater freedom of movement. Married persons have greater liberty to satisfy certain fundamental desires within the social pattern. They have the opportunity to develop an intimate relationship that cannot be duplicated without marriage.

That the difference between the two groups is one of type rather than quantity of freedom may be made clearer by a crude illustration. A small boy and his mother quarrel each time he is to practice his music lesson because he prefers the freedom to play baseball to the restrictions imposed by practice. Finally, the mother yields. Later the son's scale of values has changed and the ability to play a musical instrument seems more worth while than baseball. But he is shackled with bonds of ignorance. He does not have the freedom to play the instrument. In short, he gained freedom only to lose it.

A single person usually has no children to care for, worry about, or contend with, as the case may be. The single person who fears sex, childbirth, or something else connected with marriage does not have the fear stimulus constantly plaguing him. He has an independent income and may use it as he sees fit. His success or failure depends more largely on himself than does the married person's. To some this is a compensation. The single person feels that he has more control over his life. It is somewhat like feeling more at ease when you are at the wheel of a car than when another person is driving, even though he may be as good a driver as you are. In some cases there is a possibility of going further in one's career. This is not always true by any means and is more likely to be true in the case of a woman than of a man.

#### PROBLEMS TO BE FACED

In discussing the problems of the unmarried we must distinguish between those persons who have had no interest in marriage

and, therefore, have not included it in their plan of life and those persons who have wanted to marry, who have looked forward to it, and oriented their lives toward it, only to find the door locked. It is this latter type of person who will more probably make a poor adjustment to singleness.

In considering the following problems of the unmarried it is well to keep in mind that they are all solvable; but they are problems.

*There is a problem of companionship.* As the single person's friends marry, he has to make readjustments. There is the matter of being the odd person at social gatherings. The question of adequate companionship with members of the opposite sex is at times difficult to work out. Sharing is a satisfying experience. It increases joy and decreases sorrow. The single person has a problem in this connection. If a person remains unmarried in order to care for his parents, what will he do when his parents die and he is left alone? Some who face such demands for readjustment find them so difficult as not to be able to meet them satisfactorily, and consequently have breakdowns.

*The single person must adjust himself to the attitude of society toward celibacy.* That attitude is changing slowly, but we still tend at times to look through the eyes of the past. In many instances it is assumed that when a man remains single it is through his own choice, but when a woman remains single it is through someone else's choice—the result of necessity, lack of opportunity, unattractiveness, or some other factor. This, of course, is only a common assumption; it is not necessarily true. Yet it is enough to produce a feeling of inferiority in many persons who do not marry.

*The single person usually has a problem with regard to the giving and receiving of love and affection.* Almost everyone wants to love and be loved. The most efficacious scheme thus far discovered for the fullest development of love is marriage. The single person who has the desire for love and its expression must either find a substitute method or have his life somewhat cramped. Some single persons turn to friends or relatives. Some enter welfare work. Those who love children and have strong parental leanings sometimes either adopt children or engage in work with them. Some lavish affection on animals, either caring for strays or humanizing pets. The humanizing of

pets is often done more or less in fun. One buys a Christmas present for his dog, has a criblike basket for him to sleep in, takes him riding so that he may see the sights along with other members of the family. There is nothing "wrong" with this. But when animals are humanized to the point of shutting out human contacts, it is often a serious symptom of a dammed-up emotional life.

Alternatives for the giving and receiving of affection in marriage are in themselves neither good nor bad. They are desirable when controlled and are the only means of expression open to the unmarried person. They become undesirable when control is lost and what began as a means of adjustment ends as a symptom of maladjustment.

*A problem related to the one mentioned immediately above is that of sexual expression in the more specific sense.* There are both men and women, especially the latter, who feel no very strong sexual urge or drive. At least, they have no experience that they definitely distinguish as a specific interest in sexual satisfaction. Such persons may have no apparent sex problem. Others have a sexual urge of which they are not clearly aware because it has been repressed; but it affects their behavior, nevertheless. Still others are aware of sexual desire but know of no adequate means of satisfying it, and hence must hold it in check or resort to inadequate, incomplete, or immature substitutes.

A certain amount of sexual repression is necessary, whether an individual is married or single. Society could not exist if all biological urges were satisfied without restriction as to time, place, and circumstance. When repression becomes extreme, strange and often remote quirks of personality and behavior may be produced. The habitual cynic is often a repressed individual. The same is sometimes true of the litigious person who is forever carrying suits to court, the person who superficially advocates sexual freedom, the one who loses himself in a fanatical cause. Occasionally one finds that a very religious individual who spends his life denouncing sin and sex is one in whom strong urges have been frustrated. He denounces in others what he himself unconsciously desires. Repressed persons sometimes develop neuroses. Some exhibit an exaggerated interest in self and in symptoms of illness. If there are no real symptoms of illness, the person creates some or exaggerates unimportant ones. Sometimes the



person spends his life in a deluge of trivialities because he is repressed. He becomes unreasonably meticulous and there is little discrimination between important and unimportant details. The older woman who becomes "kittenish" and childish in the presence of attractive men may act so because her sexual responses have for years been blocked, so to speak, and when at last they are given a degree of release, they are expressed on the emotional level at which they were arrested.

We have not said that all the above types of behavior are always the result of sexual repression. We have said only that sometimes sex repression manifests itself in these forms. Since this is true, it is more than unwise to leap to the conclusion that a given person is repressed if one has made only superficial and incomplete analysis of his behavior. It is especially unwise if the person in question is young, for many young people, merely because of immaturity rather than repression, are cynical, argumentative, exhibit zeal for a cause, or advocate sexual freedom.

*The unmarried person has a problem of maintaining a balanced personality in a world organized for the controlled expression of natural desires and in a culture built in large measure around marriage and the family.* How will he prevent shutting himself off from normal contacts? How will he prevent depression, irritability, bitterness? How will he keep from becoming too introspective and self-analytical?

To maintain his emotional balance, the unmarried person, like everyone else, must face reality. But in facing reality he faces a world whose life is organized largely for persons other than himself. How can he adjust himself to the world instead of continually trying, as some do, to adjust the world to himself? The latter cannot be done and, if he stands firm in his determination, he will live in perpetual conflict with life. If he retreats from reality and refuses to face the facts or accept his position, he sets up for himself an imaginary world of his own creation and to do this is to invite maladjustment.

#### SINGLENES AS ADJUSTMENT

One does not avoid problems by remaining single; one only changes their form. Neither does one solve problems by refusing to face them. Life is full of situations involving adjustment, whether the individual is married or single. Furthermore, one

cannot gain the satisfactions of marriage by avoiding the problems of marriage. Singleness admittedly has certain compensations; but it cannot and does not produce the impossible situation of having the joys of marriage without its perplexities.

Success in marriage requires a set of qualifications, as does success in any other human endeavor. There are persons who should not marry, just as there are some who should not attempt to become opera singers, teachers, or physicians. Some students have the qualities necessary for profiting from college education, some do not; and the latter are better off in some other sort of school. There is no implication of superiority or inferiority when one chooses a vocation for which he is fitted rather than another for which he does not have the prerequisites. Insofar as certain qualities are necessary for success in marriage, the individual is faced with the two alternatives of marrying or not marrying; and his choice should be based, at least in part, on the personality traits he exhibits combined with his interest in marriage. If he feels that remaining single is the way to greater happiness in life, he should by all means remain single. He should not marry against his will just because there is social pressure exerted in that direction.

In any case, if a person remains single, he should face the facts, maintain his friendships and interests but not force them to the saturation point, avoid self-pity, make use of his opportunities, and never think of himself as inferior or peculiar. Being an "old maid" or an "old bachelor" is a state of mind rather than a legal status. There are well-adjusted single persons; there are married "old maids" and "old bachelors."

Marriage is no cure-all. It is not a panacea for human ills. It is not a creator of Utopia. Marriage is only as good as the persons in it.

## CHAPTER IV

### MARRIAGE VERSUS CAREER

For the first time in history American young women in great numbers are being faced with these questions: Shall I voluntarily prepare myself for a lifelong celibate career? Or shall I prepare for a temporary vocation, which I shall give up when I marry and assume the responsibilities of homemaking and motherhood? Or shall I attempt to combine homemaking and a career? Can this be done successfully? There have always been unmarried women who pursued careers, but never before has there been so much freedom of choice for the great majority. Choice is not yet completely free since tradition lays a heavy hand upon women's training and hence upon their attitudes and interests. Nevertheless, in earlier days women planned on marriage and homemaking with less consideration of other alternatives. Social expectations supported their single-mindedness. Today society is tending to let the individual rather than the mores make the decision.

The woman's problem is not one of deciding whether she will work, for women have always worked. It is a problem of deciding upon the type of work that she will do and its relation to her marital status. In a sense it is not so much a problem of marriage versus career as it is one of homemaking versus some other pursuit. But it is not so simple as that. Single women have homes, and it is obvious that marriage and homemaking are not synonymous although they are usually closely related as far as the individual woman's choice and activity are concerned. The great majority of married women are homemakers.

#### WHY WOMEN WANT CAREERS

Some of the reasons why women choose lifelong celibate careers rather than marriage and homemaking are similar to those that lead married women to become wage earners. In this section we shall direct our attention chiefly to the unmarried woman and the alternatives she faces.

Some women want careers because of their interest in the work or activity involved, or because of their desire to maintain "freedom" and independence, to have an independent income, to gain support if for one of the reasons discussed in Chap. III marriage is avoided or is not achieved, to find "self-expression." No one can deny that the last-named aim is a much desired goal for anyone, man or woman, married or single. If a woman can find adequate self-expression through a career rather than through marriage, well and good. Many young women, however, overlook the fact that there are numerous careers that do not furnish any medium or offer any opportunity for self-expression. Besides, they do not realize that only the minority of women, as the minority of men, have anything particularly worth while to express.

Sometimes women seek careers in order to render service to some segment of mankind or to the race as a whole, to escape boredom, to prove that they can do the work involved, to avoid housework. Marriage and housekeeping are closely associated, and a young husband's income is usually not large enough to permit the employment of servants. Hence, in most cases, the young wife cannot avoid doing housework. One must grant that there is an element of drudgery in this. There are also compensations and satisfactions if the housework is considered part of the larger process of homemaking. On the other hand, there is some drudgery, some routine, some uninteresting detail in every vocation. Many of the patients who visit a physician have something less than interest-stimulating ailments. A lawyer has to prepare numerous dull papers. A musician has more drudgery and sometimes less genius than his audience, as a rule, can realize. In comparing homemaking with a career outside the home, the better aspects of the one should be measured against the better aspects of the other; worse against worse. Too frequently the routine element in homemaking is compared with the glamour and stimulation of a career, and naturally the homemaking is thus shown in an unfavorable light.

Our money economy plays a part in women's desire for careers. In this country money is set up as a standard of judgment applying to things as diverse as human life and works of art. If a person is killed in an accident, his relatives may sue the guilty party and the court may award a sum of money, as if that could

fully compensate for loss of life. If an employee loses a finger in a factory machine, he collects money for it. If a man breaks a promise to marry a woman, she may sue for breach of promise, and supposedly a sum of money will salve her pride and heal her broken heart. If a person commits a minor criminal offense, he may satisfy the state by paying a fine. Money is one of the bases on which the population is divided into classes. It can gain prestige for dullards while geniuses starve and go unrecognized. One of the questions most commonly applied, in America, to the things that we do or make or acquire is "How much did it cost?"

In a culture in which money has so prominent a place it is not surprising that those pursuits involving wages or profits should by some persons be considered more desirable and more respectable than others. Occupations for men and careers for women outside the home involve wages and profits; homemaking does not. One would expect some women to be so influenced by our attitude toward money that homemaking would seem to them something inferior and undesirable.

Another reason—one that overlaps that just considered—is our masculine ideology. Traditionally, things masculine are considered somewhat superior to things feminine. The idea is so ingrained in our thinking and attitudes that it is only now beginning to change. It is still effective enough to make some women want to follow in men's footsteps, because that course seems preferable to fulfilling the traditional feminine role. This reason applies to some, but not to all, women who choose careers.

Some women choose careers for reasons of which they may not be fully aware and which have their roots deep in past experience. Such roots may be parents' ambitions that played a part in orienting the girl's life toward celibate achievement, the fact that the parents wanted a son, factors that produce a "masculine protest," or something similar.

Questions which can be asked but which at the present stage of knowledge cannot be fully answered are these: Are women seeking celibate careers in larger numbers today because, while there have always been women with career interests, now the gates of opportunity are open? Are they drifting away from the home because they want careers or do they want careers because they are drifting away from the home? Certainly some home-

making activities are vanishing; others are being put into their places. Many women are not aware of this. Therefore, it is conceivable that homemaking might lose part of its challenge for such women. The homemaker's contribution is not so clearly defined as formerly. As a result, some women seek pursuits in which standards are more definite and progress is more apparent. They think of homemaking in a quantitative rather than a qualitative sense.

Much loose thinking has been done on the question of marriage and homemaking versus a lifelong celibate career. The problem has been highly colored with tradition and emotion and perhaps too much influenced by the attitudes of single women and of men. After all, the single woman is in no position to pass judgment on the relative advantages of career and marriage, because she has had experience in only one field. The experience of a married woman who has never had a career is equally one-sided. Women now married after having had temporary careers are in a better position to pass judgment. Most of them prefer homemaking; but an increasing proportion, though they are still in the minority, attempt to combine homemaking and wage earning. Perhaps a widow who had a career before marriage is in the best position to judge both sides of the problem. Such women know something of the advantages and disadvantages of the career and they know marriage and homemaking. Upon becoming widows they have again to make a choice between the two. A significant number either remarry or, if they prefer not to remarry, reenter their vocations because they must support themselves. One finds very few who are glad of their widowhood because it gives them freedom to follow a career.

Perhaps the best we can do is to put the whole matter on an individual basis. It is not a question of marriage versus career in general. It is a question of whether a particular woman shall make one choice or the other, taking into consideration her personality, her abilities, her attitudes, her goals in life, her experience up to date.

### CAN HOMEMAKING BE MADE A CAREER?

This is a very common and logical query. Housekeeping is not the whole of homemaking. A house is a dwelling place, usually full of such things as furniture and equipment. A home is a state

of mind, a cluster of attitudes and relationships, which center around a house and the persons living in it. A woman may hire a housekeeper but she can not hire a homemaker. In the following discussion we shall think of *homemaking* in the broad sense as involving marriage, homemaking, housekeeping, and parenthood.

A career involves knowledge and skills. Consider what is involved in homemaking. A woman who is an effective homemaker must know something about teaching, interior decoration, cooking, dietetics, consumption, psychology, physiology, social relations, community resources, clothing, housing, household equipment, hygiene, and a host of other things. They make an impressive list. She is a "general practitioner" rather than a specialist. There are many things for a girl to do between high school and wedding besides falling in love.

The common attitude toward the knowledge and skills involved in homemaking as compared with those in a career outside the home is somewhat incongruous and paradoxical. If a woman teaches someone else's children, she is accorded professional status; if she teaches her own children, she is "just a mother." If she follows interior decoration as a vocation, she has a career; but if she applies the principles of interior decoration to her own home, she is "just a housekeeper." If she studies dietetics and has charge of a large kitchen in a restaurant or institution, she has a profession; but if she applies dietetic facts and principles to the feeding of her husband and children, she is "just cooking." This same regrettable incongruity exists with respect to all the skills and knowledge involved in homemaking.

In a career there is an opportunity for long-time growth and development. So is there in homemaking. Compare the young woman with her incomplete knowledge, small apartment, and first baby to the middle-aged woman whose home has atmosphere, who is recognized in the community, whose children are well reared and form a successful family group. Growth and development are not lacking; but of course there is no promotion in the business or professional sense.

In homemaking there is a degree of independence and freedom from supervision found in relatively few vocations. The homemaker is her "own boss," does her own planning, and budgets her time largely as she sees fit. There is opportunity for social

contacts. The homemaker performs a most important service to her family and to society; but since this service is usually not accompanied by publicity, it is often taken for granted. She has opportunity for long-time, deep satisfaction in doing well what she undertakes. She can see results. Her work is constructive and creative. She has ample opportunity for exercising organizing ability. She has considerable responsibility for planning family recreations, the life within the home, and the family's relations with other families and with community groups.

There are standards of quality and achievement in homemaking but they are not so definite as those in other careers. Mediocrity is more readily tolerated. There is not the competitive element found in business and the professions, although there is a comparative element. Some persons hold this to be one of the major obstacles to considering homemaking a career. Yet the fact that there are standards, however ill-defined, cannot be dismissed. We do have at least a vague idea of what we mean by the American home; and women are subject to prestige or criticism on the basis of their success in creating it.

Homemaking may be considered a career. The unmarried young woman's problem is not that of homemaking versus career, but that of choosing among a number of careers, one of which is homemaking. Drawing such a conclusion may seem like fencing with a windmill; its purpose is to balance emphases more equitably and to get away from the not uncommon notion that to choose homemaking rather than another career is to relegate oneself to the class of the might-have-beens. The young woman who decides upon homemaking as her career need have no feeling of inferiority. In spite of loud and vociferous protests from various quarters, she need not feel that she is making no contribution or that her contribution is less than her husband's. Wife and husband together make a contribution to family and society that neither can make alone.

This husband-wife relationship may be looked at in several ways. One may say, as some do, "Men can have careers because women make homes." One may say that women are released from the necessity for wage earning and are free to devote their time to the extremely important matter of homemaking because men specialize in breadwinning. Or one may say that together



the breadwinner and the homemaker form a complementary combination second to none.

No matter which career a girl chooses, she should plan to pursue it to the best of her ability. If she chooses homemaking, she should not be content with mediocre achievement. She should set high standards for herself and then live up to them.

#### PREMARITAL CAREERS FOR WOMEN

Even though a young woman is definitely planning on home-making as her lifelong career, there are good reasons for her preparing herself for a vocation to be pursued between school and marriage. She proves to herself and to others that she can do something useful and remunerative. She may save money to be used in buying things for her home-to-be. She is further educated by her contacts in the business or professional world. She learns the value of money. This is especially true of girls who have not had to support themselves at any previous time or who have not had to work for part or all of their expenses while in school.

Preparation for a vocation is a sort of insurance policy. The girl's finacé may die or disappoint her, so that she will remain single. Her husband may die or become incapacitated, so that she will have to earn a living for herself or for both of them. If she has children the problem becomes even more acute. In some cases she gains a better understanding of her husband and his problems. As one married woman said, "If I had not worked before marriage, I never would have appreciated my husband's worries, how he feels at the end of a strenuous day, or what home means to him." In many instances she fulfills her parents' expectations and makes them feel more satisfied with the costs of her education. She makes good use of her time and makes contacts that may help her to meet her future mate. She may get training and experience that will enrich her marriage.

In one important respect a girl's vocational preparation is more difficult and more complicated than a boy's. She must in most cases prepare for her career as a homemaker and at the same time prepare for a temporary vocation. The boy is expected to prepare for only one career. The girl may somewhat simplify her problem and at the same time enrich her marriage and homemaking if she prepares for a vocation with carry-over

value. Dietetics, nursing, teaching, nursery school work, interior decoration, and other vocations of similar type obviously have a definite contribution to offer to homemaking activities. Music, art, drama, writing may be carried over as interesting hobbies, something that the homemaker needs and that will enrich her home life. Social-work training would enable her to take a more effective part in community activities. Some vocations, such as stenography, bookkeeping, statistical work, may be more remote from homemaking, but in many cases even these have carry-over value, depending upon the girl's situation and her husband's vocation.

### CAN MARRIAGE AND A CAREER BE COMBINED?

In the light of the previous discussion this question is ambiguous, but it is commonly asked in this form. Properly, the question should be: Can homemaking and another career be combined? Or still better, can a girl marry, become a homemaker and a mother and at the same time be successful in a career outside the home? Can she successfully pursue two careers simultaneously?

**Number of Married Women Wage Earners.** The actual number of married women who work for wages outside the home is increasing. Also the proportion of the married among the employed is increasing. In 1900 about one out of eighteen married women was gainfully employed. By 1930 the proportion had changed to one in nine. During that thirty-year period the number of gainfully employed married women increased six times as rapidly as the number of gainfully employed single women. In 1900, 15 per cent of all wage-earning women were married; in 1930, 29 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

The largest proportion of married women wage earners falls into the age groups from fifteen to twenty-four years.<sup>2</sup> This seems to indicate that most of them work because of necessity rather than

<sup>1</sup> BRECKINRIDGE, SOPHONISBA, *The Activities of Women Outside the Home*, "Recent Social Trends," p. 715, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1933.

<sup>2</sup> REUTER, EDWARD B., and JESSIE R. RUNNER, "The Family," p. 420, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1931, quoting Arthur J. Todd's *Some Industrial Management Aspects of Married Women's Work and Their Bearing on the Family*, *Family*, Vol. 8, May, 1927, pp. 88-91.

choice, or else that they give up working when their babies come or their husbands' incomes increase. These figures do not show how many women are freely choosing to combine homemaking and careers because they seek self-expression or for some similar reason.

**Why Is the Number Increasing?** This question is associated with the entire process of women's increasing freedom. More women are working after marriage because they have greater opportunity to do so. Attitudes of both wives and husbands are changing. Outside agencies have taken over many of the traditional homemaking functions of the wife. The "butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker," and others are now doing in part what the wife used to do. In a way, the quantitative aspects of her work are decreasing. If she is not aware of the increased opportunity for developing the qualitative aspects, she may seek employment outside the home. The rising standard of living has made greater demands on the family purse.

We must, however, be careful not to exaggerate the problem of the married woman wage earner or to get only a one-sided view. One in nine married women works outside the home, and that means about three million women. Their problems are important. But eight in nine women do not. The chief occupation of married women is still homemaking, in spite of the rapid changes that are taking place. The married-woman wage earner is still in the small minority.

**Reasons Why Married Women Work for Wages.** Many of the reasons we shall list under this heading overlap with the reasons why women seek careers, whether they are married or single. We shall mention them again, so that we may consider them from a different point of view.

*Necessity.* In many cases the married woman works for wages because the husband's income is insufficient to maintain subsistence. This may be due to illness, incapacity of some other form, unemployment, low wages, or unusually heavy expenses. These are the women who work because they are face to face with the basic elements in the struggle for existence.

*"Necessity."* Some women work for wages because their husbands' incomes, while sufficient to maintain subsistence and even subsistence plus, are not sufficient to maintain the standard of living which the wives desire. They work to provide luxuries,

surplus, travel, automobiles, education for the children, or something else over and above maintenance. These are the women engaged in a struggle for a standard of living rather than a struggle for existence. Of course, all organisms engage in a struggle for existence; but these women do not feel the immediacy of that struggle as do those mentioned above. Nevertheless, some of these women may feel the pinch of their "necessity" almost as keenly as their less fortunate sisters feel the pinch of actual necessity.

*Personal Desire.* Some women become wage-earners for one or more of the following reasons: (1) To escape homemaking duties. (2) Because of interest in the activities, subject matter, or contacts connected with a career. The woman may feel that she can carry on such activities more effectively than she can make a home and she wants to do what she can do best. (3) To seek "self-expression." A wife's wage earning may cause marital problems, but so may straining at the tether if she longs for self-expression, believes that a career is the outlet she needs, and yet feels tied to her home. (4) To escape boredom. If a woman has a small apartment or if she does only the barest minimum with her homemaking, and if she is not skillful in the use of her own resources, she may become bored and decide that the only solution for her is to seek work outside the home. (5) To escape the care of children either before or after they are born. A woman who has a career outside the home has what seems to her in many instances an acceptable excuse for having no children. (6) To work with the husband in his business or profession. (7) To prevent stagnation. Some women feel that homemaking eventually makes for the stagnation of personal growth and development. Consequently they seek to avoid it. (8) Because of dissatisfaction with their marriage relationships. In some cases the tendency to work outside the home is a symptom of dissatisfaction with the marriage or with the husband.<sup>1</sup> The work forms an escape from an unpleasant situation. (9) To be independent, especially financially.

**Arguments for Married Women's Wage Earning.** In some cases the wife's employment permits a young couple to marry earlier than they could otherwise. If the man is preparing

<sup>1</sup> HAMILTON, G. V., "A Research in Marriage," p. 99, Albert & Charles Boni, Inc., New York, 1929.

for a profession, his income may be small and his expenses great for a considerable period.

It is said that employment makes for a closer relationship between husband and wife. The woman is enabled better to understand the man and his problems. At night they are both in the same situation. When the wife is not employed, she has been in the home all day and wants to go out in the evening, while the man has been out all day and wants to stay at home in the evening.

Some doubt the validity of this argument. The wife can scarcely understand the husband's occupational problems better unless they are in the same or similar occupations. Furthermore, the argument assumes an intellectual attitude on the part of the wife and overlooks the emotional reactions affected or produced by fatigue, competition, and a division of interest. The assumption that the wife wants to leave the home at night while the husband wants to remain in it is by no means generally true.

The wife may derive great satisfaction from her vocation. Why should not a woman do what she is most interested in and can do best, just as a man does, whether this be homemaking or a career outside the home? The traditional assumption is that most women are interested in the same vocation, homemaking. We do not make a similar assumption for men. Some women make a very real and worth-while contribution in their occupations outside the home.

It is said that employment keeps the woman mentally alert and her husband, therefore, does not leave her behind. If she is sincerely interested in keeping mentally alert, there are plenty of opportunities to be found in homemaking. Many women feel that wage earning will be a ready-made solution of their problem because the demands of the job are an impetus to effort and define the area into which their activities are to fall. On the surface this seems easier than does drawing on their own resources and making the most of their marital and domestic opportunities. Although there are many women who have marked time while their husbands have marched ahead, there are others who only think that they have, because they have confused development and promotion. Their own development is not easy to measure and is less obvious, while the husband's promotion in his occupation is readily apparent.

Employment, it is claimed, makes a woman keep up her appearance. This may be a good argument if one is thinking of women in general, for there are many wives who neglect their appearance. As far as the individual wife who is weighing the pros and cons of her own employment is concerned, this is shifting responsibility. It puts the responsibility for keeping up her appearance on something outside herself instead of on her own pride and self-respect, and her attitude toward husband and marriage.

Some argue that there is not enough in homemaking to keep a woman occupied and interested. We have already discussed this point in connection with the question: Can homemaking be a career?

If a woman devotes her time to homemaking and child rearing, to the exclusion of other interests, she too often finds herself stranded when her children leave home. There is no more pathetic person than the middle-aged woman who is lost and floundering because that to which she has devoted her life has been taken away. Her outside interests do not of necessity have to involve wage earning. It would seem absurd for a man to pursue two occupations so that when he retired from one he could follow the other. Some men devote so much time and thought to their vocations, to the exclusion of all other interests, that when they retire they are discontented and restless and gradually drift back to the "office." They are in much the same position as the woman whose family has grown up and left home. Other men keep up extraoccupational interests, and to them retirement means not boredom and pointlessness but opportunity to do more fully and more leisurely some of the things that they have always wanted to do.

Remaining a wage earner after marriage permits a woman more readily to readjust herself if her husband dies or is incapacitated. If she does not remain employed and is thrown again on her own resources, she finds herself out of touch with her vocation and often has to take an inferior job. This is true, and it makes for hardship. Fundamentally the situation is not dissimilar to that of a man. If a man prepares for a vocation and devotes part of his life to it and then through technological change, illness, accident, business depression, or age he finds that he can no longer pursue his chosen occupation, he must make a readjustment. For many men this means accepting inferior jobs.

There are no statistics available, but one would guess that there are as many men who have to readjust vocationally at some time in life as there are women who give up their vocations to devote themselves to homemaking and later have to reenter gainful employment with the cards stacked against them. Most men do not try to follow two occupations at once in order to insure themselves against such emergency. Some do, however, and some among them do it successfully; but they are in the minority. What applies to men in this connection applies also to unmarried women.

The paragraph above is not meant either to censure married women or to laud men. Its purpose is merely to show the speciousness of this one argument for married women's gainful employment. The possible problem of having to change from one pursuit to another at too late a period to make the change advantageously is one that challenges not only married women, but everyone who devotes the better part of his life to any sort of career or occupational pursuit.

**Arguments against Married Women's Wage Earning.** How many individuals, male or female, married or single, can successfully pursue two careers simultaneously? Not many. The exceptional person can do it, but the ordinary person cannot. The problem of combining marriage and homemaking with another career is especially difficult, since it is likely that the two pursuits will demand qualities of different types. The former, to be successful, requires self-negation; the latter, self-enhancement. The former demands cooperation, the latter competition.<sup>1</sup> The woman who attempts to combine homemaking and another career has a problem of integrating the various elements of her personality so that she is adjusted to both situations and the outside-career elements do not infringe upon those demanded by the home and do not carry over into the home situation.

There is the possibility of overfatigue, which may result in irritability, illness, or breakdown. Homemakers and mothers are just as likely to become tired as women who work outside the home. Nevertheless, whether justifiably so or not, it is usually true that when a married woman works outside the home she also assumes the responsibility for homemaking.

<sup>1</sup> NIMKOFF, M. F., "The Family," p. 407, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1934.

Husbands often help considerably with the housework; yet the larger part of it—especially the responsibility for planning and supervision—falls upon the wife, even when there are servants. Tradition still makes housework less acceptable for men than wage earning is for women. The wage-earning wife has two sources of fatigue; therefore, it may become excessive. Worry over the demands of her dual responsibility not only contributes to her fatigue but may become a problem in itself.

As has been already intimated, many of the positions held by married women wage earners do not keep them mentally alert, offer no opportunity for self-expression or development, and entail very little satisfaction except that derived from the pay check. Many jobs not only give no opportunity for expression and development but provide only crushing, monotonous, exhausting routine, which destroys initiative, deadens interest in living, and engenders bitterness as the woman casts her lot with others of her kind in the perennial conflict between employer and employee.

The woman may neglect her home. The employed wife is subject to both the demands of the home and the demands of the job. Since the latter is likely to be more uncompromisingly urgent and less flexible, she must neglect the former if time limitations and fatigue make it necessary to neglect one. Even if she does have time and energy to satisfy requirements in the quantitative aspects of homemaking, she will probably fall short in the qualitative aspects.

In recent years the job of the homemaker has had a tendency to creep up her arms from her fingertips to her head, if we may put it so anatomically. It is becoming less a matter of the number of things she does, since many of her former tasks are now being done by outside agencies and with the aid of mechanical appliances. It is becoming more a matter of improving the quality of her home and of expressing her personality through it. Households are less production units and more consumption or absorption units, in both the economic and the cultural sense. There are, of course, class differences as to the degree to which this process has occurred.

The employed wife may neglect her husband. We do not mean to suggest that the wife is guardian, caretaker, or nurse for her husband. Since, however, the sexes are complementary in



some important respects and are trained for complementary roles in life, there is a possibility that there is greater opportunity for happiness if husband and wife supplement each other than there is when there is duplication of function or of contribution. Would society not consider it neglect of the wife if a husband worked for wages only part of the time and spent the rest of his time doing something he wanted to do because for some reason he did not derive sufficient satisfaction from his occupation? There is really no more logical reason for a man's being subject to the traditional pressure toward full-time breadwinning than there is for a woman's being subject to the traditional pressure toward full-time homemaking. If a man does engage in a full-time occupation in order to support his wife and home, should he not expect that his wife give whatever time is needed to making that home?

If a woman works outside the home, she may make many contacts that are directly to her advantage. On the other hand, the homemaker has in many instances opportunity to make contacts that are advantageous to the husband in his business or profession and thus are indirectly as advantageous to her as those she might make in her own gainful employment. Here, again, may be found that complementary relationship for mutual good rather than the duplication of function with only the pooling of income.

The gainfully employed woman may neglect her children. Even with the development of nursery schools, the adequate rearing of children requires a great deal of time, effort, interest, and information. A mother is in a position similar to that of a student who spends fifteen hours per week in classes but must spend at least twice that much time in preparation in order to maintain a high quality of work.

There is still pressing need for improving the quality of child rearing. There has been so much emphasis on the first few years of childhood that there is some tendency to think of child rearing in terms of infant care. Perhaps more is known about infants than about older children. Their biological needs are apparent and very urgent. Rearing a child is at least a twenty-year process. The lack of understanding and appreciation of adolescent and college student problems is almost appalling in so many instances that the challenging need for the improvement of child rearing in its broadest sense can scarcely be denied.

Children obviously do not ask to be born. If a woman has children, she has a responsibility to them, no matter what her other interests. With standards of child rearing as ill-defined as those of homemaking in the more particular sense, it is easy for mothers to neglect their offspring. Both parents can be restrained by law from making their children the victims of physical cruelty, but they cannot be restrained from making them the victims of conflict, distorted personality, and warped experience, which in time may be more cruel than corporal punishment or physical torture.

A woman who is gainfully employed may hire someone to take care of her children. Can she afford to hire someone who will have an interest in them equal to hers, who will have her cultural background and ability, who will have a personality as attractive as her own, who will be a person for whom she wants the children to develop deep affection as they would for her? In many cases she cannot afford such a governess; the hired person is inferior to the mother.

There are, of course, cases in which the reverse is true and the hired person is superior to the mother. Furthermore, persons hired are likely to leave and then the child is subjected to a difficult process of shifting from one governess to another.

The children of employed mothers are sometimes forced to assume responsibilities beyond their years. They must take care of younger children when they should be playing. They must prepare meals or do marketing or household tasks. This may be excellent training when administered in moderate amount, but it becomes undesirable when it means a premature imposition of adulthood upon childhood.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, if a woman has a strong desire to work outside the home and she cannot or feels that she cannot, because of her children, or if she gives up her work because of them, she may harbor a feeling of resentment that will be subtly manifested in her attitude toward them and treatment of them.

The employed married woman may feel torn between two desires neither of which she can choose to the exclusion of the other. She may feel keenly the pressure of tradition and may be poignantly subject to emotional conflict. As a result she may overdo some aspect of homemaking or of child rearing in

<sup>1</sup> BERRY, GWENDOLYN HUGHES, *Mothers in Industry*, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 143, May, 1929, p. 323.

order to prove to herself and others that she can both make a home and work outside the home at the same time.

The couple may become so accustomed to the higher standard of living made possible by the two incomes that it is difficult to lower their standard without dissatisfaction if the wife stops working. This may cause them to postpone having a family. The same readjustment would have to be made if the woman did not work for wages and the man lost his job or had his income reduced. But there is a greater element of necessity involved in the man's working than in the woman's; and a woman is subject to all the occupational uncertainties to which a man is subject, plus childbearing and discrimination. Thus she is the more likely to lose her position.

A counterargument might well be "Why not let her make hay while the sun shines?" If she does, if her income is handled intelligently, if a good part of it is saved, the couple will be better off even if she does lose her position.

It is often maintained that gainfully employed married women take jobs from married men and single women who must work to support themselves or their families. There may be some truth in this argument, especially with respect to the jobs of single women. There is only a limited number of vocational opportunities in the country and, if some of these are grasped by married women, fewer are left for others.

Nevertheless, the argument has a serious weakness. If it is not good for married women to take jobs that might be held by more needy persons, neither is it good for men to earn more than a living wage or to work for salary or profit when they have sufficient capital to live without working. Yet we do not expect men so situated to give up their positions. Why, then, should we argue that a married woman whose husband can support her but who wants to raise her standard of living or engage in a vocation in which she is interested should give it up just because someone else might conceivably take over her job? That would be discrimination that has no place in a democracy.

#### SOME PROBLEMS TO BE FACED IF THE WIFE IS GAINFULLY EMPLOYED

Wage earning by the married woman is often a result of marital maladjustment as well as a contributing factor to domestic problems. Nevertheless, when this element is introduced into

the family situation, it is probable that certain problems will be created.

*There is the attitude of the husband.* Some men readily accept a plan that includes a wife's employment. Some even go so far as to expect it. Still others are so deeply influenced by tradition and by the ideals of home life and marriage that have become established in their own thinking that they cannot accept such a situation. The fact that his wife contributes to the family income may irk a man because he has been taught that the husband should be the provider, and her relative independence may seem to belittle him. The actual or imagined attitude of friends may concern him. If his wife is more successful than he, he may feel inferior, again reflecting the tradition with which his whole experience and thinking have been permeated. He may resent her being away from home or her partial neglect of what he considers her domestic duties. He may protect himself by developing a patronizing attitude toward her work.

In any case, the question that the woman faces is not whether his attitude is right or wrong, justifiable or unjustifiable. The question is whether they can be happy together when his attitude is what it is. The question is a practical, not a theoretical or academic one. If she thought enough of him to marry him, is she going to let their happiness be marred by this one thing, no matter who is right or who is wrong? He may have many fine qualities and their marriage may have great possibilities; but it may not be easy for him to eradicate the attitudes and ideas that have been stamped indelibly upon his personality.

On the other hand, the husband's problem is not one of whether married women should work. His problem is this: Can he be happy with a wife who wants to work and feels restrained? She may have fine qualities too. Yet there may be something in her personality that causes her to wish employment in a way difficult for him to understand because he has always been taught that he would work as a matter of course. There are no other alternatives for him and he does not know what it means to be restrained from doing something that one wants very much to do, and especially to be restrained by what may look to his wife like the unreasoning attitude of the person she loves. The husband's problem, too, is a practical rather than a theoretical one.

*If there is to be no hired help in the home, some practical arrangement for doing housework, preparing meals, and caring for the*

*children must be evolved.* If there is to be hired help, there is the problem of direction and supervision.

Some persons feel that if the wife works outside the home, there should be joint responsibility for the housework. Others feel that if the husband's income is sufficient and the wife still wishes to work, she should not expect the husband to assume part of the responsibility for housework.

*There is the problem of common friends.* If husband and wife work in different places and the woman is away from home most of the day, there may be a tendency to form two separate groups of friends instead of a group of common friends.

*There must be some decision as to how the two incomes are to be used.* There are numerous schemes possible. The husband may pay for necessities, the wife for luxuries. They may pool their incomes to form a common fund from which all payments are made. They may keep their incomes entirely separate, each buying things personal, such as clothing, from his own earnings and paying half of such expenses as rent. They may live on the husband's income and save the wife's for some special purpose, such as travel, a baby, a car. No one can safely generalize as to the best arrangement, but some plan agreeable to both must be worked out if friction is to be prevented.

### CONCLUSION

We have discussed the reasons why married women work outside the home, the arguments for such work and those against it, the problems that the couple will probably face. The only reasonable conclusion is this: we cannot generalize; it is an individual problem. It is not a question of whether married women should work for wages. It is a question of whether a particular married woman, with her particular skills, personality, opportunities, interests, and tastes, and with her particular husband and home situation, should be gainfully employed in a particular occupation. The effects of her employment on herself, her husband, her children, and her home will depend upon many factors, such as time, fatigue, type of work, income, which no one but herself can fully evaluate. There is only one generality that she might bear in mind: successfully to combine homemaking and wage earning requires an exceptional woman *and* an exceptional husband.

## CHAPTER V

### AGE FOR MARRIAGE

What is the best age for marriage? This is a question very commonly asked. It is not so simple as it seems, nor is it easily answered. Before attempting any answer at all let us divide *age* into five components or types—chronological, physical, mental, social, and emotional. These are five aspects of maturity.

Common sayings show that in popular thought there are varying concepts of age. They show that chronological age is not always to be taken at its face value. "A man is as old as he feels; a woman is as old as she looks," we say. "A man is as old as his arteries." According to some women, "Men are just grown-up boys." "Act your age," says one student to another whose behavior does not seem coincident with his years. An individual may not be of the same age in all respects. To say to a person, "If you are twenty, how old are you?" is not so ridiculous as it may at first glance appear.

#### CHRONOLOGICAL AGE

An individual's chronological age is the number of years he has lived. It is based on the number of leaves he has torn from the calendar and determines the number of candles on his birthday cake. When a person is asked how old he is, he gives his chronological age. This is the age that some people try to conceal. It is the age most frequently used in comparing one person with another and is the one considered by the law in drawing lines of demarcation between groups, for example, those who may vote and those who may not. In general, law is based on the assumption that all persons reach the same level of development in the same period, thus making it possible for a person to vote when he becomes twenty-one, no matter how immature he may be, or to marry when the legal age for marriage is reached, whether he is prepared for marriage or not. Yet even the law sometimes makes a distinction between chronological age and other types,

as, for instance, in prohibiting idiots from voting no matter how old they may be, the distinction here being between calendar age and mental age.

### PHYSICAL AGE

In most persons there is a close correlation between chronological age and physical age. There have been instances in which registering officials or relatives have made errors and the bones have proved more reliable indicators of age than the birth certificate or the family Bible. In many cases study of an individual's bones has satisfactorily established his age when the date of his birth is entirely unknown; for example, in cases of persons found dead and identified only after certain characteristics, including age, have been determined.

A considerable portion of the skeleton of a child is not bony material at all; it is cartilage. The bony material develops from centers of ossification. In the long bones, such as those in the arms and legs, these centers appear in order from birth to about the fifth year. They are so regular in appearance that they "almost literally punch a time clock."<sup>1</sup> From the fifth to the twelfth year the centers grow in size. From the twelfth to the twenty-first year they unite with each other until, finally, what was part bone, part cartilage becomes entirely bone. By the use of X ray, T. Wingate Todd and others have made careful studies of this process. It has been found that by noting the development of these ossification centers in the long bones "it is possible to determine the age of anyone under twenty-one years, within two or three months,"<sup>2</sup> allowing, of course, for exceptional cases in which chronological age and physical age do not coincide.

After the twenty-first year we must look particularly to the bones of the skull for age determination. The skull is composed of twenty-three bones, separated in younger persons by sutures, the jagged lines one sees on a skull. These bones fit into one another much as do the parts of a jigsaw puzzle. As the skull bones grow and the person matures the sutures tend to disappear and the bones fuse together. This disappearance of the sutures occurs "according to a rigorous schedule."<sup>2</sup> The three sutures

<sup>1</sup> KROGMAN, WILTON, *The Skeleton Talks*, *Scientific American*, Vol. 159, No. 2, August, 1938, pp. 61-64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

at the top of the skull fuse in order: one at twenty-two years, one at twenty-four, one at twenty-six. They are completely erased at thirty-five, forty-two, and forty-seven.<sup>1</sup>

In the process of maturing, the skeleton not only increases in size and degree of ossification but also changes in shape and relative proportions. Not all parts grow at the same rate or at the same time. Sometimes one, sometimes another is further advanced. This disparity of growth is especially noticeable in adolescence when the individual as a rule seems to be, as we say, "all hands and feet." He does not know what to do with his hands. He falls over his own feet. His muscles have not kept pace with his bones, so that he has a gawky appearance. He "shoots up like a weed," but he does not fill out as rapidly as he grows tall.

A child's teeth appear in fairly regular order with fair but not exact punctuality, making for a correlation between chronological and physical age as far as teeth are concerned. But some children are born with teeth and others cut their teeth rather late. Some readers have their wisdom teeth, while others do not, although they may be of equal years. Some students still have a few of their milk teeth, showing that there is often a disparity between these two types of age.

At first a child exhibits only random movements and cannot focus his eyes. Gradually muscular coordination increases, until he focuses eyes, follows an object with them, reaches for things, crawls, walks, runs, and finally becomes able to go through the complicated movements of which adult human beings are capable. Some children walk earlier, some later, showing again that there may be a discrepancy between physical and chronological age.

**Puberty.** At puberty (sexual maturity) a child's sex organs, which have remained more or less dormant, begin to develop and to function in a more nearly adult fashion. Simultaneously, secondary changes take place.

A boy's voice begins to change, so that he may start a sentence on one pitch and end it on another, unable to predict from word to word what the next sound will be. His muscles increase in size. Pubic hair appears. What was previously only an unimpressive fuzz becomes a shavable beard, in which he may take pride because it is an indicator of his new status.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*



In a girl, the breasts develop. Owing to fat deposits, what were angularities become more aesthetic lines. Pubic hair appears. The pelvis broadens, and the girl is prepared for child-bearing. But, although there are instances of extremely early motherhood, in most cases a girl is not fertile for a period of one to three years after her first menstruation.

In addition to adjusting to the physical changes that occur at puberty, the child must adjust to emotional changes and learn to live with the new attitudes engendered by his maturity, and with the new subjective experiences that spring up within him.

In both sexes there begins the production of germ cells. In the boy these cells accumulate with the fluid in which they are suspended, and puberty is announced in part by emissions of this fluid during sleep. These nocturnal emissions are a normal occurrence in boys and young men. They serve to relieve tension in the reservoirs in which the fluid is stored and to keep available new and vigorous germ cells for reproductive purposes.

In the girl, puberty is marked by the first menstruation. For this new and profound experience the little girl should be adequately prepared. She should be told in advance what will happen and why it happens, should be taught how to take care of herself, and should not be told anything that will frighten or shock her. It is, after all, a normal function. If in some cases it is accompanied by pain or illness, that is because of some anatomical defect or some physiological malfunctioning. Many of these painful symptoms may be relieved by intelligent medical procedure. They are not inherent in the function itself. We should be extremely careful to distinguish between the normal function of menstruation on the one hand and symptoms of malfunctioning on the other, just as we do between normal functioning and malfunctioning in connection with other physiological processes, such as digestion, seeing, hearing, or circulation. We do not term eating a curse and frighten children into starvation because some people are allergic to certain foods or have digestive disturbances.

The little girl should be taught the application of hygienic principles with regard to menstruation; but there should be no attitude of uncleanness, shame, inferiority, or disgust connected with it. In fact, she should be taught to think of its onset as a source of pride. Little girls like to play "grownups."

They pretend that they are housewives and mothers and often wear ill-fitting adult clothes and shoes to enhance their imaginary status. Menstruation is an indication of adulthood in which a girl will take pride if she has had proper instruction. As one little girl said on the day of her first menstruation, "Mother, you've got to treat me as a young lady now." To her, menstruation meant a change of status and entrance upon a new phase of existence.

If the child is not prepared for menstruation and does not know what is happening when her menses begin, she may be shocked or horrified. She may think that she has had an accident or is the victim of some strange malady. She may not know to whom to turn for advice or what to do. One girl was in such a predicament and could think of no way out but to go swimming, which she did each month for some time, until finally an older girl told her what was happening and how she might care for herself. The scars of that experience have been carried by that girl to her twentieth year. Hers is not at all an unusual case. If the child's clothing becomes spotted before she realizes what is happening, she may be so embarrassed that her experience will color her attitude toward sex. All such terrifying and embarrassing experiences may be prevented by accepting menstruation as a natural function and preparing the child for it.

If the reader is a young woman whose early experiences have led her to develop the wrong attitude toward menstruation, by carefully rethinking the entire situation she may possibly remove some of the scars that have been left on her personality.

In the matter of puberty, too, there may be a disparity between chronological and physical age. Most children reach puberty at about the thirteenth or fourteenth year, but in exceptional instances girls have menstruated as early as the eighth year or before. Some girls do not begin to menstruate until their late teens or early twenties. A few never do, and their condition is termed "amenorrhea."

A person's sexual development may stop at an early level, so that he goes on getting older but some of his physical traits remain those of a younger person. A not infrequent example of this is the man with a high-pitched voice or scanty body hair. The primary sex organs, too, may remain in an immature state, producing a condition termed "infantilism"; the person may be

an adult by the calendar, by his appearance, stature, and musculature, but a child by his sexual anatomy and functions.

### MENTAL AGE

An individual's mental age depends on both his equipment and his achievement. By studying the behavior of large groups it is possible to establish norms for various age levels. Then an individual may be compared to the norm and his relative advancement or retardation determined. The extreme of retardation is found in a person who, although of adult years chronologically, has the mental equipment and achievement of a young child. From idiocy up to and beyond normal development an individual's mental age may not coincide with his chronological or physical age. Because of inborn deficiency, accident, or disease, mental development may be arrested at any level, while in other respects the individual goes on to adulthood. Some people are born mentally and physically deficient and as a result can never reach adult achievement. Scores on mental tests are only one criterion for judging mental age.

### MATURE BEHAVIOR

An individual reacts as a whole rather than as a conglomeration of disconnected parts. It is difficult, therefore, to draw fine lines of distinction between mental, social, and emotional age when they are considered in their broader aspects. Criteria for determining these types of age overlap. Hence, we shall discuss them under the general heading of mature behavior.

There are patterns of behavior that may be thought of as mature and others that may be thought of as immature. In characterizing a given individual no single criterion is sufficient. His relative maturity depends upon a number of factors. An individual may exhibit both mature and immature behavior at the same time, just as he may have a high-pitched voice but otherwise show adult masculine traits. A person may be twenty by the calendar but five by some of his behavior patterns. He may be fully developed physically and have a high-grade intelligence, and yet exhibit childish responses.

Persons of high school and college age are not expected to have reached the limits of their development. The important thing is not that you be mature before your years permit, but that you be

making progress in the right direction and that there be a reasonable correlation between your calendar age and the rest of your development. Some aspects of development are beyond the individual's control. There is nothing he himself can do about his skeletal growth or his mental equipment. Other aspects of development may be improved by expert treatment and assistance. Infantilism may sometimes be remedied by medical care, or an individual with low intelligence may by special educational methods be helped to take a more nearly normal place in social life. Still other aspects of development may be furthered by the individual himself.

**What the Individual May Do.** Maturity depends in large part on habit patterns. The individual reacts in a given way because, with the physiological and nervous equipment with which he was born, he has learned to respond in certain ways to the stimuli, the situations, the experience to which he has been subjected. His behavior depends in part on the habitual reactions that have been developed. Some of these habit patterns are so deepset in his personality that they are beyond his control. Others he may more readily modify. In order to change them, he may find help in the following suggestions.

1. He may analyze himself in the light of what he knows of maturity.

2. He may make a conscious but not self-conscious effort to control his reactions, in order to replace childish habits of response with mature habits. This may take considerable time and he should not expect immediate results. If some of his habits are of years' standing, he cannot expect to change them overnight.

3. He may provide himself with the sort of experience that will help him to develop a more mature pattern of behavior by subjecting himself to situations in which mature rather than immature behavior is required. If a girl has a tendency to shun boys and to move only in segregated groups because that is more pleasant and is the path of least resistance, by limiting herself to such segregated groups she sets her habits more deeply. If she deliberately participates in the activities of mixed groups, even though this may be difficult at first, she may further the development of more mature patterns of behavior.

4. Perhaps most important of all is the desire to be more mature. If an individual is completely satisfied with his imma-

turity, if he does not see that by stopping his development too soon he is denied the satisfactions of mature existence, then, though he may change because of factors beyond his conscious control and initiative, he is not likely to further his progress toward maturity by willful effort. By willful effort we do not mean that an individual can say, "Now I am going to be mature" and he will become mature. We mean that he may by his own effort and on his own initiative change his habits in the direction of greater maturity.

**Development of the Individual.** In his development an individual does not pass from one stage to another, as if the stages were a series of steps, each previous one being left entirely behind as each new one is mounted. His development is more nearly like a series of concentric circles. As he passes from each smaller circle to the larger one that encompasses it, some of the elements represented by the smaller one remain to compose part of the larger area.

This process is clearly shown in the development of an individual's love interest. A newborn infant is a completely selfish, self-centered, asocial, inconsiderate organism. His only love is for himself, although he is not conscious of this. His wants must be immediately satisfied or he cries until they are. His feelings must take precedence over those of others. He wakes his parents in the middle of the night but has no twinge of conscience. There are no restrictions on his behavior except those imposed by biological inadequacy. The first person other than himself who enters his world is his mother, because she is close to him and does much for him. She becomes his second love. Next he discovers his father, then other relatives and friends. As he grows older he takes an increasing interest in his contemporaries, children of about his own age, at first with no discrimination as to sex, although he may be vaguely aware that boys and girls are not quite the same. As his awareness of sex differences grows he leans more strongly toward segregated groups. He associates with boys and tends to join gangs. The little girl associates with members of her own sex and tends to shun boys. Gradually an interest in the opposite sex takes precedence over that in the child's own sex and, instead of shunning girls, the boy begins to approach them. At first almost any girl passably attractive will do; it is "girlness" rather than a girl which interests him. He

falls in and out of love with amazing rapidity. Little by little his interest narrows to a smaller and smaller number of girls until finally he falls in love with one girl and marries her. When his children come, his love extends to them too. As he grows older and his children mature, his interests tend to extend to the community.

We may readily see how each of these stages in the development of love interest includes some of the elements of previous stages. The boy who is loyal to members of his gang still loves his mother; so does the college student who has fallen in love with a girl he may marry. The woman who loves her husband more than she loves anyone else may still have deep affection for some of her women friends. One loves one's children at the same time that one loves one's spouse, parents, friends.

Comparing development to a series of concentric circles makes it appear simpler than it actually is, for not only do some traits remain in the course of normal development, but others are outgrown and the growth of some takes place unevenly. It may cease for a given trait while it continues for another. Love for one's mother is a trait that arises in infancy and carries over in somewhat changed form into adulthood, as explained above. But an individual's love for his mother may remain of an infantile type. In such a case it is not so much a matter of the earlier trait's being carried over in changed form as larger circles develop around smaller ones, but more a matter of its remaining unchanged, as if the larger circles were incomplete and a wedge-shaped segment continually impinged upon them. In the first case, the elements of immaturity are changed into elements of maturity and fused into the larger picture. In the second, the elements of immaturity remain intact and unfused.

This explanation is oversimplified and overdiagrammatic. Personality growth cannot be depicted in a simple geometric figure. In growth no previous stage is left entirely behind, but in various individuals there is a varying degree of persistence of traits. Some trait or traits may persist in immature form even into adult life. Under such circumstances there is said to be a *fixation*, that is, the person's growth with regard to a particular trait has become fixated or stopped at an immature level. In the illustration above, the individual has a mother fixation because his love for his mother, instead of being of a mature type,

has failed to develop beyond the infantile stage, and the person has never gone on to fall in love with another individual of his own age but of opposite sex. It is normal for people to go through a stage in which they have stronger leanings toward persons of their own sex than toward those of opposite sex; but if their development stops at this level, they are the victims of fixation. Any aspect of development may lag behind others and behind chronological age.

Personality is composed of numerous traits. The integration and correlation among them, as well as the degree of development exhibited by particular traits, form a measure of maturity. Most persons are more mature in some respects, less mature in others. A personality in which a particular trait has remained at the infantile stage while others have become mature is almost certain to be poorly integrated, because one cannot be an adult and a child at the same time.

Adulthood is a social status; maturity is a level of development. Society is organized for both adults and children. It sets up a standard of behavior for those who have adult status and assumes that there will be a correlation between adulthood and maturity. A person who meets adult situations with attitudes and habits that were formed in childhood and failed to mature as the years passed is a child in adult guise. There is certain to be a conflict between what society expects of him and what he is able to achieve.

**Regression.** An individual may be immature because of regression, that is, he may go on to a more mature level, then, finding adjustment difficult, unpleasant, or impossible, he may return to a more immature level. He becomes a backslider.

An intelligent, attractive, cultured woman of forty had been married rather early and had two children. At the time of marriage she was in love with her husband and for several years their relationship was a happy one. Then gradually their mutual affection decreased to the vanishing point and, although they continued to live together on a friendly basis and with no open conflict, they were husband and wife in only a legal sense. Finally the husband died and the wife concluded that she would try to gain some of the happiness she had missed. One of the first things she did was to fall in love with and marry a man fifteen years her junior. She had tried adjustment on a more

mature level in marriage and failed. Instead of seeking happiness on a level more nearly compatible with her chronological age, she went back to the level at which she had formerly found happiness and married a man about as old as she was when her love for her husband began to wane.

Perhaps the best-known case of regression—a case more serious than the numerous jokes about it might lead one to suppose—is that of the bride who “goes home to mother.” The young woman falls in love and marries with great expectations. For some reason she finds that adjustment in her marriage is more difficult than she had anticipated and she cannot carry it through. So she leaves her husband and returns to her mother. She has tried adjustment on a more mature level and failed. Instead of working it out on that level, she takes a step backward emotionally and returns to her mother, because with the latter she finds security, affection, and the solution of problems.

Another common case of regression is that of the homesick student who leaves school. He tries adjustment on a more mature level but cannot succeed. So he goes back home, where familiar circumstances, proximity to parents and friends, and a situation that his habit patterns fit make adjustment easier. Most homesick students remain in the new circumstances until new habit patterns develop which enable them to adjust on the more mature level.

One may observe numerous instances of temporary regression that are quite harmless; in fact, they are sometimes beneficial. Consider for a moment the middle-aged alumnus who returns to his alma mater for the twenty-fifth reunion of his class. It happens to be the week end of the home-coming football game. As soon as he reaches the campus he sheds the cloak of reserve and poise that characterizes him as the stern business executive or the dignified professional man and becomes collegiate with a vengeance. He feels an obligation to cheer most loudly at the game. He may saturate himself with alcohol. After the game he joins the crowd in pulling up the goal posts. He stays up all night “with the boys.” On Monday he returns to his office, his temporary regression over, tired perhaps but none the worse for wear and possibly even benefited by his emotional release.

A man becomes unusually successful in business and accumulates considerable wealth. He owns a town house, a country



house, and a cabin at the lake; but he is not satisfied. When he was a boy he dreamed that one day he would own a house with green shutters, and for more than forty years that desire has goaded his soul. He cannot rest until he owns the house with green shutters. When he gets it, he enjoys it not on the level of the middle-aged man but with the satisfaction of the day-dreaming boy.

Little Johnny is given an electric train for Christmas; but Johnny must stand by and wait for his father to recover from temporary regression before he is allowed to put his little hand on the switch.

#### CRITERIA OF MATURE AND SYMPTOMS OF IMMATURE BEHAVIOR

Maturity is relative, and there is no quick and easy way of determining whether an individual is mature or immature. However, certain traits or the lack of them may be used as criteria. It is important to understand that many of these traits may be indications of immaturity in one individual while in another they may be the result of some other cause. They are symptoms. One might compare them to fever. Fever also is a symptom; it may be caused by measles, diphtheria, influenza, the common cold, or any of a number of diseases. When a physician is diagnosing a patient's ills, he takes into account all symptoms. He does not base his judgment on one alone; and insofar as it may be possible, he studies the patient's history.

Immaturity does not always and necessarily signify childlikeness. An individual may be considered immature in a given respect if his development stopped at some level below that at which he should be at his calendar age or if his development has fallen short of normal expectations and possibilities. A mother who attempts to keep her child from becoming independent and who cannot reconcile herself to his marriage is immature, but hardly childlike.

In making marriage successful there is probably no single factor more important than maturity. Everyone is aware of the fact that there are thousands of child brides in this country, that is, brides who are legally and chronologically children and whose marriages are therefore built on a precarious foundation. There are many more thousands of child brides (and child bridegrooms) if they are judged by their behavior. They do not make sensa-

tional newspaper copy, but their marriages are almost sure to suffer because of their immaturity.

If an individual is immature in one or several respects, he might be expected to react in immature fashion to some of the problems and situations involved in marriage. Since marriage is for adults rather than children, such a person makes difficult the realization of the full possibilities of marriage, or makes necessary an undue amount of adjustment on the part of his spouse. If the adjustment cannot be made and if the other person persists in his immaturity, the marriage may fail.

Let us list and discuss, then, some of the criteria of maturity and some of the symptoms of immaturity.<sup>1</sup> We shall permit some overlapping in order to make various emphases. In judging maturity and immaturity we must base our conclusion on the traits that typify an individual's personality and beware of being misled by behavior or reactions exhibited very rarely or only once.

**A mature person not only has intelligence comparable to his calendar age, but he uses this intelligence on a mature level in his daily life. *He develops a reasonably objective point of view toward both himself and things and persons other than himself, determining a considerable part of his behavior on this objective basis.*** The person who goes through life with blinders on, who cannot see himself even in part as others see him, whose behavior is founded too largely on emotions, prejudices, and his own imagination, is immature.

*He profits by his own experience and the experience of others.* So does a child. But if a person reaches a plateau in his mental development so that he fails to go on to the limit of his possibilities, he may be considered immature. His mental development lags behind what it might have been if his experience in the years he has lived had been more fully utilized.

*He integrates what he knows and lives by that integrated knowledge.* An individual whose "mind" contains "watertight compartments" holding different and inconsistent contents, with no seepage from one compartment to another, is living among the paradoxes of a child's world, in which impossible incongruities continually occur but are accepted without question. The man

<sup>1</sup> Some items in this section were suggested by K. N. Bowman, "Personal Problems for Men and Women," Chap. 10, Greenberg, Publisher, Inc., New York, 1931.

who does not see, for example, that democracy and class discrimination are incompatible is little different from the child who sincerely believes that Santa Claus with his abdominal rotundity comes down the chimney.

*He sees various sides of a problem, studies it carefully, seeks a thorough solution.* The immature person resorts to ready-made cliché solutions. Whether they are traditional or radical does not alter the fact that they are often inadequate because they are not based on critical analysis. They are applied with confidence because they rest on the assumption that all problems fall into simple categories and that a simple and ready-made solution may be drawn from the correct pigeonhole.

This same evidence of immaturity is found in slightly different form in persons who accept a life philosophy ready made and from other persons without thinking through to one of their own. Those who do this have no true philosophy at all, because they merely repeat words without assimilating ideas. This is often the case of a student who labels himself atheist, Marxist, Bohemian, or something equally extreme, mouthing the utterances of others but failing fully to understand their points of view. A philosophy so acquired comes from the outside instead of from the inside. In twenty years after graduation, the professed atheist will probably be a believer, the supposed Marxist may have become a capitalist striving for profits, the Bohemian is likely to have discarded his bizarre clothes and unconventional manners and become a staid and conservative member of the community who prefers the comforts of home to the adventure of a Greenwich Village attic.

The immature person is highly suggestible and easily influenced by others. He is especially liable to the influence of one around whom there is cast an aura of hero worship and tends to be uncritical as to the effect of such influence upon him. The mature person is open to suggestion, but he accepts it critically and does not put it into effect without reasonable examination. The influence of others bears upon him, but he does not become an always empty vessel ready to have suggestion poured into him. His behavior is an outgrowth of his own personality rather than the reflection of some other.

*A mature person sees himself as part of a larger whole. He has an appreciation of man's relation to the universe and has worked*

*out a philosophy of life which includes things cosmic and eternal as well as things earthly, temporary, and immediate.*

*He has some knowledge of social life, how it is organized, what the requirements are for living in a society.* He seeks his own advancement through cooperation with and service to other members of the group. The immature person does not know what is expected of him socially. He seeks his own ends through the selfish and self-centered insistence of the infant, who expects others to contribute toward his satisfactions but does not voluntarily and consciously give anything in return. The mature person takes social responsibility. He has civic pride, takes his place at the polls, does his share in caring for the needy and unfortunate, seeks community betterment, obeys the law. The immature person tends to let others worry about the community and, even when there is opportunity for assuming responsibility, he, childlike, lets others do it.

A student group entails some aspects of social living and students show their relative maturity by the degree to which they voluntarily assume responsibility for the welfare of the group and the maintenance of its school buildings and grounds. The student who litters the campus with waste paper, who throws cigarette butts on the floor, who writes on walls or carelessly damages furniture exhibits immature behavior. He is like the infant, who depends upon someone else to change his clothing and pick up his toys. The student who acts in such a way that other persons develop the wrong impression of the school is failing to take responsibility for the welfare of the group.

*He understands the finesse of social relations.* He knows the details of etiquette which make social life smoother and more agreeable to the greater number. The person who is constantly offending or annoying others by his lack of tact, his poor manners, or his uncouth behavior is like a child who thinks only of his own satisfaction without regard to other persons and who is too young to have had his natural responses polished into social niceties.

*He makes concessions to others but at the same time he does not become too dependent upon them.* He lives partly by compromise but maintains his own individuality and integrity. Since marriage to be successful requires some compromise, this particular indication of maturity is especially important. There are,

of course, some things on which an individual cannot compromise without sacrificing integrity, ideals, values, or principles. Refusal to make such a sacrifice is not an indication of immaturity. When, however, the refusal to compromise takes the form of obstinate failure ever to meet other persons halfway, it indicates immaturity. The immature person expects others to cater to him, to give in to him, to adjust to him.

When in his emotional development the child discovers his brothers and sisters and other contemporaries, he also learns (or should learn) that he cannot always have his own way and neglect taking into account the wishes of others. He should learn to derive pleasure from consideration for others. If he does not learn this, he remains immature.<sup>1</sup>

*He has a reasonable respect for authority and tradition.* In his development, an individual passes through a stage in which he tends to revolt against authority and tradition. At first he tries his parents to see how far they will let him go. He resists them, contradicts them, says "I won't," does the opposite of what they suggest. As he grows older he uses similar tactics on tradition. Anything with the taint of the past on it he depreciates. Anything savoring of the customary he resists. He wants to throw overboard everything old and accept wholesale things new, to prove his independence and modernity. All this is part of the process of breaking away from the family, of setting up his own standards, and of becoming independent; to that extent it is good. It should be a temporary, transitional stage. Eventually, if he is to become mature, the individual must learn to compromise between obedience and independence, between conformity and progress. The mature person weighs tradition against innovation. He balances the old with the new. He neither holds to all things old without considering things new nor accepts things new because they are new, instead of examining them and accepting them because they are good, nor wants to discard everything old. If the revolt stage persists too long, an individual may be considered immature. A person may also be considered immature if he lives only by the standards that his parents taught him when he was young and fails to make new adjustments to an ever new and changing world.

<sup>1</sup> MORGAN, JOHN J. B., "Keeping a Sound Mind," pp. 185-186, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1934.

Revolt is sometimes manifested among students in an almost stubborn and aggressive disregard of school rules. They break rules just because they are rules, not because the rules are in themselves particularly irksome. To believe that rules are unwise or unnecessary and to work through established channels for their revision is one thing. To violate rules only because they are restrictions is to act like a child who stamps his foot and says, "I won't," just because his mother says, "You will."

In order to make it as agreeable and as smooth as possible for the great majority, life in a group must be defined and to some extent limited by standards and rules of behavior. Society at large has laws. Student groups have rules. The mature individual finds true freedom through obedience. By conforming in certain required matters he is free to do as he wishes in others not limited by regulation. The immature person seeks freedom through disobedience, only to find that eventually his disobedience brings upon him the pressure of the group and limits his freedom more than it would have been limited by the original regulations.

A mature person lives in a world of reality. *Insofar as he is able to discover reality he faces it.* He discriminates between the real and the unreal; and, although he is interested in the products of creative imagination, he does not confuse them with actuality. The immature person is like the child whose world is peopled with fairies, nonexistent playmates, Santa Claus, speaking animals, and other imaginary beings, and is filled with nondescript play objects which, in the child's mind, assume the polish and finish of carefully prepared and executed toys and apparatus.

The mature person faces reality when he is confronted with a problem. He accepts it without unreal components, and the solution constitutes a direct attack. The immature person is inclined to embellish his problems with imaginary elements and to seem to solve them to his own satisfaction by retreating from the world of reality to a world of his own making. The former adjusts himself to the world: the latter adjusts the "world" to himself.

One of the most common illustrations of this tendency to escape reality is one type of day-dream. There are two types of day-dream: (1) the type in which the individual sets goals for himself, but the goals are possible of achievement and in his

dreams he makes plans and orients himself toward those goals—for example, plans for vocational achievement or the building of a home; (2) the type in which the individual sets goals impossible or at least improbable of achievement, or in which the individual confuses the contents of his day-dream with reality and acts as if the wish had already become fact. The second type is an escape from reality. Everyone—especially in youth—day-dreams. It seems to be a normal process among students. When, however, the dreaming becomes excessive, interferes with normal activities, or is a substitute for the solution of problems in the world of reality, it is unhealthful. Take, for example, the unattractive girl who dreams of having a handsome, princely lover. She neglects her academic work because she is in a fog of anticipation, and does not cultivate acquaintance with boys because none can embody her impossible ideal. She seems to solve her problem by creating an imaginary situation. Since she does nothing to solve it in the real world, she may tend increasingly to depend upon retreat and rationalization in attempting to adjust the discrepancy between hopes and possibilities and in explaining why she remains unmarried.

Another retreat from reality is found in the exaggeration of symptoms of illness or in the actual or imaginary creation of them. An athlete who limps off the field after making a poor play, pretending that an injury impaired the exercise of his skill, evades reality. The following is a more serious case. A boy in high school found himself ready to go to class without having prepared an important assignment. As he was hanging up his wraps in his home room, he inadvertently bumped his head slightly on one of the clothes hooks. That gave him an idea. He hurried to his seat and smeared a bit of ink on the "wound." Then he reported to the school nurse and said that the injury had left him with a headache. She gave him a class excuse and he went home. He knew that his mother would detect his trick, so he sneaked into the house and actually bumped his head against the wall until it was black and blue and there was a noticeable swelling. He stayed home from school for the remainder of the day and had ample time to complete his assignment.

In college he was confused and discouraged by a love affair that was not progressing as he hoped it would. He could see no

ready solution for his problem, so he shot himself. Fortunately his life was saved. Again he had tried to solve his problem by escaping from reality. He was no more mature when he pulled the trigger than when he found a loophole of escape in the bump on his head.

There are innumerable others who, like this boy, exaggerate actual physical symptoms or exhibit physical symptoms that have an emotional cause. Some of these are classed as "neurotic"; all are in a sense immature.

Another type of escape from reality is intoxication. Some persons drink because alcohol makes them less inhibited and more sociable. They are dissatisfied with reality, dissatisfied with their own personalities. Instead of developing new and more desirable traits, they resort to alcoholic escape and to the creation of an unreal "world," in which they seem different from what they really are and act in a way different from their usual behavior.

The individual who identifies himself with some famous character is probably trying to escape reality. He knows that he himself is insignificant, and in identifying himself with someone of more importance he tries to build up his self-esteem. The man who basks in the glow of the president's prestige because he once shook the executive's hand is of the same ilk as the boy who attempts to define his own status by saying to his friend, "My pa can lick your pa."

The snob tries to hoist himself above reality by his own bootstraps, assuming an attitude of superiority that is inconsistent with his position but that seems to place him on a relatively higher plane because his manner implies that other people are on a relatively lower level.

The mature person realizes that change is part of the world of reality. He adapts himself to change and expects it. The person who will not accept the fact of change is one who would, if he could, hold the world back so that it might remain permanently on the level at which he feels most comfortable. This means that he refuses to go beyond a level that represents something short of his possibilities.

*He lives in a world in which past, present, and future are balanced and integrated.* The infant lives in the present. Although past experiences influence him, he is not aware of the past and cer-



tainly is not aware of the fact that the experience of the race extends back further than his birthday. He cannot know that there is a future, because the concept of a future and to a considerable extent the concept of the past depend upon language. The person who attempts to escape reality tends to live in the past or the future instead of the present. The mature person lives in the present as well as the past and the future.

*He faces an unalterable situation in which he has a deep interest with poise and a minimum of conflict.* He accepts the inevitables in life without a feeling of defeat. There are, of course, many unalterables and inevitables to which he is indifferent, because they do not affect him. An individual who struggles against a fate over which he has no control is like a child whose kicks and screams do not prevent his mother's dragging him across the room. This does not necessarily imply fatalism, for the fatalist thinks of all situations as inevitable and preconceived by some power greater than himself. He does not distinguish between those over which he has some measure of control and those that cannot be changed.

Everyone must sooner or later face the prospect of his own death. He need not assume, as the fatalist does, that the date and manner are prearranged and that nothing he can do can alter them. But he must face the fact that he is mortal and that his life at best is short. He may enjoy life to the full and wish it could be interminable. Nevertheless, when death comes, he is ready because he has developed a philosophy of life that includes his own decease. He has accepted an unalterable fact, an inevitable situation, with a minimum of conflict and defeat. The immature person fights against this fact of death, which to him is unacceptable. He beats his head against a stone wall only to find that his head rather than the wall is affected by his beating. He may refuse to talk about death, as if his silence and evasion could alter death's inevitability.

Since death is one of the inevitables in the world of reality, one must expect and prepare for the death of loved ones. Since children usually outlive parents, the former should work out a life philosophy that will include the decease of the latter.

A failure or a disappointment once passed becomes an unalterable situation. One cannot go back and relive what has become part of history, although it may be possible approximately to

duplicate a previous situation and direct it toward a new outcome. The immature person often stops with his failure. He goes through life explaining and excusing himself. He is knocked down and lies there. The mature person is knocked down and bounces as high as he fell. He rises above failure. He builds on the shoulders of failure.

Life for many persons involves temporary separations. Children and parents must often be separated while the children are in college. Student lovers must frequently be separated during their school years. If ambitions are to be realized and goals achieved, such temporary separations fall into the class of inevitables. The mature person accepts them with a minimum of conflict.

The poor loser is immature. Once a game is lost, it is lost. Although the player may win a future game, he can never win the one that is past. That past game and defeat in it form an unalterable situation. The player who becomes angry or refuses to play again is as immature as the child who says, "If you don't play my way, I'll take my dollies and go into my own yard."

*He depends upon adult accomplishments for prestige.* The business-man who can neither forget nor let others forget that he was a star fullback in college, the professional man who too conspicuously displays the emblem of a college honorary fraternity, the college student who continually reminds her friends that she was elected to the honor society in high school, these and others like them graduated academically but never graduated emotionally. Excellence in any field of endeavor is not to be depreciated, and recognition for such excellence and insignia to symbolize it are not without their place; but as one grows older, he has to prove himself over and again. To rest on his oars is an indication that development has been blocked. It is not the recalling of early achievements but rather the depending upon them for prestige in adult life that indicates immaturity.

In later life there is a tendency to cast a halo around the past and to exaggerate early achievements, in order to make oneself seem in the present as worthy of prestige as he thinks he was years before. Persons who do this are not really entering a second childhood; rather, they never grew out of the first.

*He uses the present rather than the past as a point of departure.* A tendency similar to the one mentioned immediately above, but

not identical with it, is noticeable in a person who uses some earlier period of life as the point of departure for all comparisons and all judgments of things present. The past becomes a point of reference that does not change as time goes on. People are friendly or unfriendly, morals are loose or strict, homes are beautiful or ugly, it is good to do this or not good to do that, all as compared to the life and affairs of the earlier period. In his way, anyone who takes this point of view is a sort of missionary, dwelling in a strange land, resisting the cultural influence of the group in which he resides, willing to change them to his way of life if possible, harking back to his native land for his standards, leaving his loyalties and fidelities at home while he goes forth among the heathen, whose customs because they are different he considers inferior.

*He accepts his chronological age for what it is.* He may not wish to grow old and his behavior and attitudes may be more youthful than his years. However, that person is immature who will not admit his chronological age even to himself, who without acceptable reason tries to deceive others because he strives to hold on to his youth. He is refusing to face reality and is attempting to stop his own development before it has become complete. He thinks that he can stop the clock by refusing to look at it or change the seasons by refusing to admit that the earth moves around the sun.

**The mature person is independent.** *He can fulfill his economic role in life.* If the individual is a man, he can support himself, his wife, and his family. If the individual is a single woman, she can support herself. If she is a married woman, she can adequately fulfill her economic responsibility as homemaker. The person who cannot or will not carry his share of the economic load is immature. He is like a child who does not know what his responsibility is or is not expected to have any. This does not include those who through illness, accident, or other factors beyond their control are prevented from assuming the role they are willing and eager to assume.

The person who expects something for nothing, who depends upon luck rather than effort, who thinks that the world owes him a living is immature. He is like the child who takes for granted his parents' care and believes that in some way, without effort or explanation, the things he wants will be given to him. Over-

dependence upon other people is an indication of immaturity. Most wives are economically dependent upon their husbands. This does not make them immature, because they perform functions to counterbalance the financial dependence. If, however, a wife expects her husband to take care of her as if she were a child and without her making any contribution to the home except a decorative one, she may be considered immature.

*He is relatively independent of his parents.* Overattachment to or overdependence upon one's parents or family is an indication of immaturity, especially when it extends beyond the age at which an individual might normally be expected to be relatively independent. As we have already seen, an individual passes through several stages in the development of his love interests. In one of the earlier stages his first love is his mother. If he remains on that level instead of progressing to a more mature one, he is immature. College students are not expected to have reached the limits of their emotional development. Many of them are attached to their families and dependent upon them emotionally as well as financially. We said also that as an individual passes from one stage of development to another he does not leave previous stages completely behind. It is, therefore, normal and desirable that a person should love his parents and be devoted to them. But he should grow to love them on a mature level.

Eventually, every person should be able to "sail under his own steam"; he should be relatively independent of his family. Each individual, if he is to become mature, must be emotionally as well as dietetically weaned. Either type of weaning makes mother and child less important one to the other.

Many students are content to snuggle in their parents' emotional arms, so to speak, being "mother's little girl" or "mother's little boy," as the case may be. The remedy, however, is not a sudden, cruel, superficial assertion of independence but rather a gradual step-by-step, well-founded development. We are discussing the student who is overattached to parents and who on the basis of such a discussion as this might make a dash for independence for which he was inadequately prepared. The problem of the student who is not overattached to parents but whose parents are overattached to him is somewhat different. Certainly no student proves his emotional independence by not wanting to see his parents. A student who wants to stay away

from home, say, at a holiday season, does not prove his maturity unless he has some good reason for his attitude other than his desire to stay away.

It requires nine months of continual development and some maternal inconvenience to produce a new individual, and his birth is a painful process for the mother. It is also a trying experience for the baby. Although he apparently feels no pain, his life hangs in the balance until he is safely launched on his semi-independent existence. Once the process has started, there is no safe retreat for either mother or child. The process must be carried to conclusion, else the very life of one or both may be sacrificed. No matter how much we may regret that birth is painful, women willingly submit to it and are admired and loved for their sacrifice and self-negation. It is not all sacrifice and negation either, for there is the woman's inexpressible joy in her baby.

In a sense, each individual is born not once but twice. The first time, he is born an infant. His more or less direct physical attachment to his mother is severed and he leaves the protection of her body to live and struggle for existence in the outside world. The second time, he is born an adult, a mature person who has broken from his infantile emotional attachment to his mother and launched into the independent existence of adulthood. This process too involves a long period of development and the new birth is not without pain, trial, and sacrifice for mother as well as child. But if the mother has the proper attitude, this second birth will be a source of satisfaction rather than of pain. Here again there is no safe retreat for either without endangering the emotional life of one or both. We accept biological birth as the only and natural means by which an individual can pass from one stage of existence to another; we do not even attempt to resist it. We are more prone to resist emotional birth. In some cases both mother and child grow to accept a blocking of the natural process, so that the child remains immature, perhaps even emotionally embryonic, if we may so use the term. The price paid for such blocking of this natural process is exorbitant. The child remains overdependent upon parents. Parents usually die before children do. On whom can the child then depend? There is no one, and he finds himself an emotional orphan.

Just as a too-hurried biological birth is dangerous to mother and child if the mother is not prepared for it, so a too-rapid

emotional birth without preparation may be excessively painful and dangerous. It is natural and necessary for a child to become independent and to be born an adult. If the process causes pain, that pain must be accepted as the accompaniment of a natural phenomenon. If possible, the pain may be lessened; the process need not be made unnecessarily rough. But the process must go on to completion, else the full satisfaction of two generations' maturity will be sacrificed to the false god of fixation disguised as devotion.

Parent fixation may be manifested in numerous ways. Sometimes it takes the form of an unusual feeling of responsibility for the parents' welfare. Some feeling of responsibility is normal and desirable; but the normal should be carefully distinguished from the abnormal. When, however, the child feels so responsible that he permanently forgoes marriage, he is probably the victim of parent fixation. At other times parent fixation is manifested in a child's tendency to blame himself for his parents' failures. Overattachment to parents may be a cause for homesickness not only among college students but also among brides and bridegrooms. If a child habitually prefers the companionship of his parents to that of his contemporaries or if he looks too much to his parents for his decisions, the probability is he is overattached to them.

Parent attachment plays a part in marriage adjustment not only in the matter of homesickness but also in the matter of the wife's or husband's assigning relative values to parents, children, and spouse. If a wife puts her husband first in her affection, her mother and baby fall naturally into the picture in most cases and she may have all three. If the mother resists, the problem is complicated but not changed in substance. If the wife puts her mother first, she may have her baby but not her husband. If she puts her baby first, she may have her mother and may or may not have her husband. This is no doubt an oversimplification of a complex situation, but it may help to make clear the part that parent attachment may play in marriage.

If a husband has a mother fixation, his wife and marriage may suffer. He will be in perpetual conflict, torn between two loyalties. The child in him and the man in him will be perennially at odds. If he leans too strongly toward the side of child, if he places his mother first and his wife second in his affection, if

he looks to his mother to make decisions which are imposed upon the wife or which the wife and husband should make together, the wife may not be able to find happiness in her secondary role, and the result is conflict between her and her husband.

Hero worship is normal in early adolescence. It is part of the process of emotional growth and of breaking away from parents; but it should be a transitional stage. When it remains as a permanent component of behavior and personality, it indicates immaturity.

Students often ask what an individual may do if he is in love with a person who is overattached to one of her parents or whose parent is overattached to her. Such a student must realize first of all that there is no simple thing to be done to remedy the situation and that he himself is probably in the least advantageous position to do anything. He may, however, understand the other person, and that is part of the solution. There are several considerations to which he may give serious attention in deciding whether or not marriage would be advisable.

How old is the parent who is overattached to the child? Is the parent young enough to adjust to the new situation produced by the marriage? If the child is overattached to the parent and the latter is very old, it may seem on the surface like a situation that will soon be remedied by the death of the parent and that, therefore, marriage with the child would be quite safe. But parent fixation does not necessarily depend on the presence or even the life of the parent; it may persist after the latter's death. A case in point is that in which the husband's mother fixation produced a family crisis more than a year after his mother's decease. In another case, attachment to her mother has seriously colored a woman's attitude toward her husband and toward their marital relations for more than twenty years after the mother's death.

Where will the young couple live with relation to the parents of the spouse with the fixation? Living in the same house, next door, on a near-by street, in the same town, in a near-by town, in a distant place would each produce a somewhat different situation. Although proximity makes it easier for the overattached person to depend on the parent, distance, like death, is no guarantee of eventual readjustment. Geography sometimes has little effect upon emotional bonds when habits have already become set.

Does the parent use subtle means to hold the child? Does the mother play on the child's sympathy? Does she make appeals for support, protection, and companionship? Does she have attacks of illness which have no apparent physical cause but which occur when the child is considering marriage and are apparently designed to make it difficult or impossible for the child to leave home?

Is it a case of parent being overattached to child, child being overattached to parent, or of mutual overattachment? With regard to the reader's marrying the person in question, the three situations are mentioned in order of increasing seriousness.

Will the individual have to contribute to the support of the parent after marriage? Such support may be necessary or it may be the result of the child's feeling of obligation. In either case, each check may serve as another knot in the fetter that binds parent and child together and as another thorn in the flesh of the spouse, who is struggling to make the marriage surmount the obstacle of emotional immaturity.

Has there been any appreciable change in the parent-child relationship? Is the child making any progress toward maturity and independence or has his development apparently ceased on a definitely immature level? Has his falling in love had any effect on his relation to his parent? How does the person in question treat you, the reader, now before marriage? Is he increasingly putting you in first place or do you get a definite impression that you "play second fiddle"? If the latter is true, do you have any substantial evidence on which to conclude that you will take first place after marriage or are you the victim of wishful thinking?

How old is the child in question? What appears to be overattachment at eighteen may be only delayed maturity rather than fixation. On the other hand, there may be fixation at this age. Younger persons should be judged partly by the direction in which they are moving and by the fact of their moving, as well as by their actual achievement. If, however, the child is in his late twenties or thirties and there still seems to be evidence of over attachment, it may more readily be interpreted as fixation. But this is no reason for the college student to gloss over a questionable situation and to substitute wishful thinking for careful observation and intelligent analysis.



Is either child or parent aware of the situation? Is either attempting to do something about it? If there is a sincere attempt on the part of either or both to assist the child in becoming more mature, there is some hope. If there is satisfaction with the relationship and no attempt is being made to remedy it, the probability is that the condition will become encysted, walled in, so that outside influences cannot penetrate or change it. The following case extends beyond the wedding but illustrates this point.

The girl had to leave college because she could not bear to stay away from her mother. Her father was dead and she felt that she was "all her mother had," although the mother had remarried. The mother encouraged this attitude and succeeded in binding the girl very close to her. In spite of this, however, the daughter married. Before the wedding, the husband was aware of the mother-daughter attachment but he loved the girl and assumed that she would outgrow her immature attitude. However, the marriage is not working out well. The girl has become pregnant. The husband's salary has been cut. The couple have turned to the girl's mother for financial assistance, which she willingly gives. They live in the same house with the mother and the stepfather. Mother and daughter associate together in their recreation and usually go out together, leaving the two men at home. The girl says that when the baby comes she will give it precedence over her husband in her affection, since in her opinion a girl is foolish not to put her child first. The husband had an opportunity to take a much better position in another town, but his wife opposed his doing so since she refused to leave her mother. Girl and mother are aware of their unusually close attachment but laugh about it and assume that it is as it should be. The husband is desperate and does not know what to do. He loves his wife and has tried to wean her away from the mother, but his efforts have failed.

Are there other children to whom the parent may turn if the particular child in question marries and leaves home? If there are, as a rule the problem created by the overattached parent is not so serious for the young couple as in the case where the spouse is an only child.

Is the parent a widow or is the other parent living? Widowhood sometimes complicates the problem.

Who makes the child's decisions for him? If his parent does and if he is likely to turn to his parent rather than to his spouse after marriage, there is danger, because the spouse may not be able to accept this situation.

Is the person dominated by the parent or is he squirming under the parental thumb? If the latter is true, there is more hope for him. It may be an indication of the beginning of an awareness that may eventually lead to readjustment.

Is the child afraid of the parent? Is he afraid to hurt the parent's feelings by getting married? This latter must not be confused with tact and consideration; it is rather a fear of asserting his independence.

Is the child able to adjust himself to life away from the parent? Can he, for example, adjust to college life away from home? This is not a sure test of maturity, for again geography may not cut emotional bonds and he may retain immature habits and attitudes in spite of distance.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the point is worth considering and failure to adjust away from home may indicate over-attachment.

*A mature person does not depend too much upon flattery, praise, and compliments.* Everyone likes to be commended and finds pleasure in knowing that his position is secure and his behavior approved by members of his group. The person who needs too frequent bolstering up by his associates and leans too heavily upon them for a definition of his status is immature. Such a person is like the child, who depends almost entirely upon his elders for judgment as to whether he is right or wrong, good or bad.

*He does not easily take offense at slights or what he interprets as slights.* The young adolescent often feels that the whole world is against him, that nobody understands him, and that his parents are especially lacking in this highly desirable virtue. "Mother," says the girl, "you just don't understand. You don't know how I feel. Things were different in your day." So they may have been and the mother actually may not understand. Frequently, however, the child's attitude is due to the fact that she is beginning to break away from home ties and to assert her independence. In the early stages of this process the

<sup>1</sup> GROVES, ERNEST, "Marriage," p. 275, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1933.

girl is on the defensive, because to her everyone but herself seems out of step. It is often not so much a matter of the mother's failing to understand the child as it is of the child's failing to understand herself.

If the adolescent is walking along the street and someone looks at her in passing, she wonders why. She may say to a person who in all innocence looks at her during a conversation, "What are you looking at me that way for?" If anyone laughs in her presence or even within earshot, she thinks it is she who is being laughed at. In a sense, she carries a psychological chip on her shoulder. If this attitude of defense and this easy offense at slights or assumed slights persists into later adolescence and adulthood, the individual may be considered immature. Here again maturity does not imply the other extreme; a person need not assume an attitude of complete indifference.

*He accepts the responsibility for his own acts.* Each person is the product of his biography. His experience up to date explains his behavior. If he is to become mature, he must say, "I am what I am because of my past; but explanation no longer constitutes excuse. From now on I take the responsibility for my own acts. I will no longer shift it to biography."

Past experience is an excuse for present behavior only so long as an individual remains unaware of this fact. Once he has had it called to his attention, his awareness becomes part of his biography and should be taken into consideration in his subsequent behavior. This is not meant to imply that merely pointing this out to an individual will enable him to change his personality and way of living, that he should blind himself to the causative factors in his past that have influenced his development, or that he should immediately exaggerate self-blame to the extreme of morbidity and begin to depreciate himself or consider himself a failure. It implies only that, instead of putting the blame for his behavior on his past experience, he can, if he will, do something about his own habits and attitudes. This will require time. Eventually he may retrain himself, develop new habits, even exercise will power and self-control. A human being is not an automaton, the slave and unchangeable product of his past.

An illustration or two will clarify this point. Much is written about the effects upon children that are produced by divorce and family breakdown. There is no doubt about the seriousness

of these effects. Children's personalities are warped and distorted. Their ideals and loyalties are rendered askew. Their behavior is colored by the conflicts, disillusionments, insecurity, and tensions of the broken or breaking home. Broken homes contribute more than their proportionate share of juvenile delinquents. All this is explanation.

Suppose that the reader is the child of divorced parents. His early home life was unpleasant. He is full of conflicting ideas and ideals. His attitude toward his own future marriage has been colored by the failure of his parents. He feels insecure when he contemplates his own assumed inadequacy, and he wonders whether he could make his marriage successful. More than that, he is continually on the defensive in his relations with other people. Because of his insecurity he maintains his position (in his own mind) by being critical and depreciating. If such a reader is to become mature, he must realize that this explanation of his attitudes, though adequate as an explanation, is no longer an excuse. There are two alternatives open to him. He may continue as he is at present, the product of his biography, blaming the past and his parents' failure for his own behavior. If he does this he remains immature. Or he may begin a new chapter in his biography. He may determine to profit by his parents' mistakes rather than to be limited by them. He may, through careful analysis of the explanation, obviate the need for excuse.

A student is doing poorly in his academic work. He says that his high school training was poor, that his high school teachers neither aroused his interest, made him study, nor taught him how to study effectively. He is not rationalizing; all that he says is true. To prove himself mature he must take the responsibility for his own acts. He must learn better study methods. He must apply himself more effectively. Then, if he still fails to achieve, he must himself take the blame for not overcoming his handicap and not continue to let the handicap excuse him. His maturity does not depend upon his academic achievement, because under the circumstances that may require considerable time. His maturity depends, rather, upon his attitude toward his achievement.

*He applies adult criteria to his personal traits.* An individual may be considered immature if he carries over into adult life

an inferiority feeling based upon a childhood trait or experience, without making the transition to adult standards. Citing common instances of this will make the point clear.

A boy is laughed at by his playmates because of his unusually small stature. They exclude him from some of their games and taunt him with opprobrious nicknames, such as "shorty," "runt," "half pint." As a result he feels inferior to other boys. In an attempt to prove that he is equal to them, he becomes a bully. When he reaches manhood, he continues to be something of a bully. He orders his wife about in military manner. He bears an almost visible chip on his shoulder. He has carried into adult life an attitude formed in a childhood setting and has not realized that adults do not usually judge a man by his size. They judge him by his personality and his achievements. Yet this man behaves toward adults as if they were calling him "shorty."

A girl has been overweight all her life. She is intelligent but has never been pretty. In college she makes high grades but has difficulty about participating in extracurricular activities because of her extreme shyness. She is afraid to meet people, has difficulty in carrying on a conversation, cannot speak in a group. She continually belittles herself and disparages her own achievements.

When she was six years old her parents had their second child, another girl. This second child was unusually beautiful and was accorded the devoted attention of relatives. As time went on, the younger child took her place more and more in the limelight, and the older one was more and more left out. It seemed that nothing she could do compared favorably with what her sister did and that it was impossible successfully to compete with the younger child. So she gave up trying to compete, assumed that she was inferior, and withdrew from any situation that would make her inferiority apparent to others. Now she is reacting to an adult situation as if it were the one of childhood. She cannot participate in extracurricular activities because she fears that what she does will compare unfavorably with what others do, as if those others were her sister and observers were her relatives.

**A mature person controls his behavior. He acknowledges possible undesirable urges and appetites in himself but tries to**

*rise above them and to exert conscious and intelligent control.* The immature person may indulge appetites that he considers undesirable and unworthy of him, doing it secretly or making excuses to himself for his indulgence, as if he were sneaking behind a psychological barn to puff on a symbolic and figurative cigarette. The man who opposes vice to the point of fanaticism may be hiding behind a blind of reform and deriving a vicarious pleasure from condemning in others what he himself would like to do. The man who drinks because the "boys" insist and because such "good fellowship" is supposed to make for more profitable business contacts may be giving an excuse for an appetite that he desires to satisfy, while refusing to admit the truth.

*He will endure present discomfort and sacrifice for future gain.* The immature person expects and demands immediate satisfaction of his desires and needs. We are not discussing, however, the extreme type of sacrifice, in which a person mortifies the flesh for spiritual gain after death. Such a person is inclined to put the emphasis on the sacrifice rather than upon the gain,<sup>1</sup> and his acts and attitudes may be somewhat remote from this topic of maturity.

Let us suppose that two boys are classmates in high school. Both are interested in girls. Both find study trying. One boy is so anxious to have a good time that he leaves school, gets a job with a small salary that furnishes him with spending money, buys a secondhand car, and has a good time with his girl friends. The other boy graduates from high school and goes to college and professional school. The probability is that after twenty years there will be a noticeable contrast in their economic and cultural achievements. One boy mortgaged the future for the present. The other was mature enough to sacrifice for future gain.

Many high school and college marriages are the result of immaturity. There are students who feel that they must marry as soon as they fall in love or fall into what they consider love. They cannot wait. They are not mature enough, as other students are, to postpone marriage—even though this course may be trying—because they understand that postponement means a longer period for more adequate preparation for marriage and hence promises, in the long run, a more successful married life.

<sup>1</sup> MORGAN, JOHN J. B., "The Psychology of the Unadjusted School Child," p. 37, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1927.

*His behavior is determined in part on the basis of principles rather than pleasure or pain.* Certain things are done because he considers them values, because he wants to do them or feels that he should do them. The immature person, on the other hand, does the same things because someone or something forces him to do them. Take, for example, the matter of honor system versus faculty suspicion and supervision. A student who refrains from cheating on an examination only when the instructor is present to detect violations is immature. He is honest only when he is forced to be so by fear of penalty. The mature student is honest whether the instructor is present or absent. He does not cheat on examinations because he considers honesty a value worth preserving and would rather fail the course than violate his personal integrity.

*He exhibits adult restrictions upon his behavior.* Often younger persons feel that to become adult is to do away with all restrictions on behavior. One sometimes sees students boisterous, unconventional, uncouth, in order to prove their adulthood. Their tremendous effort to seem older serves only to accentuate their youthful age and actual immaturity. The mature adult does not live without restrictions; he substitutes adult restrictions for those of childhood. The type rather than the quantity is changed.

The person who discusses unpalatable subjects at a dinner table is like a child who embarrasses his parents by discussing with guests the most inappropriate details of natural history. Behavior typified by showing off is like that of a child who disrupts his mother's tea party by turning somersaults on the living-room floor. Excessive use of cosmetics, gaudy clothes, noise for noise's sake, sometimes hysterics are means of bidding for attention in rather juvenile fashion. The immature person demands attention to please himself rather than to gratify those who give the attention.

The person who habitually exaggerates the expression of emotions, who pretends to collapse when he is told something that could by no stretch of imagination be sufficient cause for collapse, who punctuates his conversation with open-mouthed, starry-eyed grimaces, whose vociferous expression of surprise is out of proportion to the stimulus is play-acting, like the child whose meager world, in order to seem satisfying, requires the embellishments

of a free imagination. This is not the same as behavior which to an observer seems to be out of proportion to the stimulus, but which actually and without exaggeration expresses what an individual feels.

The child does not mind his own business. He asks questions about matters that do not directly concern him, except insofar as he is curious about them. He draws no distinction between "no trespassing" areas and public property. He respects no privacy of thought, word, or deed. The adult who continually intrudes into other people's affairs and infringes on other persons' privacy is immature.

The man or the woman with an uncontrolled temper is like an undisciplined child. He expresses his emotions explosively or by sulking, without regard to the feelings of those about him. He may also threaten another with his displeasure. The mature person studies other people to determine what reactions on his part will best influence them.<sup>1</sup> He also exhibits what may be termed "selective anger." He directs his anger only toward the particular person who precipitated it, instead of making the innocent suffer with the guilty.

Cruelty may be the result of various types of conditioning factors, but it may also be a symptom of immaturity. Children often tease and torture animals, deriving pleasure from observation of the creatures' reactions. They do not mean to be cruel, because they do not fully understand that the animals feel pain. The cruelty is a result rather than a motive. When a grown person derives pleasure from the discomfiture of others, he may be considered immature, especially when he causes the discomfiture. The practical joker is such a person. He produces discomfort, pain, embarrassment, or fear in his victim and finds his childish act amusing. A great part of fraternity initiation and of college hazing is of the same ilk.

Not all practical jokes are indications of immaturity, however. Much depends upon appropriateness of circumstance. Practical jokes are out of place at a wedding. At a Halloween party they are not. Persons attending such a party expect them. Much, too, depends upon whether the victim as well as the perpetrator enjoys the prank. At the party both enjoy it, while there is no pleasure for the dinner guest whose chair is pulled from under

<sup>1</sup> MORGAN, JOHN J. B., "Keeping a Sound Mind," pp. 190-192.



him, for the freshman who is hazed by upperclassmen, for the "pledge" who is made ill by the corporal application of fraternal love, or for the bride who starts her honeymoon with worry, disappointment, and nervous exhaustion.

There must be a trace of this type of cruelty in most of us, however, for we often find enjoyment in the mild and harmless discomfiture of others, an enjoyment that quickly changes to sympathy if the discomfiture becomes pain. Suppose a very fat and very pompous gentleman strutting along the street suddenly slips and falls. Unless he is injured, observers will probably laugh. Perhaps it is the incongruity of the situation rather than the fat man's predicament that makes us laugh at his plight. We laugh at the antics of motion-picture comedians, when in real life their experiences would be most unpleasant. In animated cartoons cruelty may be carried to extreme, and yet the audience's reaction is one of laughter. There is one essential difference between the practical joker and the movie audience, however; the former causes the victim's discomfiture, the latter only observes it.

Boys sometimes derive pleasure from causing girls physical pain. They slap girls, shove them, pinch them, knowing that what they do is painful to the girls; nevertheless, they themselves enjoy it. Not infrequently the girls do too. Some girls derive pleasure from hurting boys in nonphysical ways. A girl may deliberately say things that hurt a boy, tell slight untruths or exaggerate the truth in order to hurt him, date a second boy in order to worry the first one, or lead a boy on only to drop him suddenly and see him suffer. Such behavior may be the result of some conditioning experience that has made the girl afraid of boys or made her hateful or vengeful. It may also be a symptom of immaturity. This is not to be confused with the tendency of some women to be mildly cruel for a brief period during the menstrual cycle. We shall discuss that in a later chapter.

*Sadism* is a word often used carelessly to designate any sort of cruelty. Strictly speaking, however, it refers only to cruelty from which the perpetrator derives sexual pleasure. Since it is probably due to a fixation of response plus an exaggeration of certain aspects of sexual behavior, it is considered perversion and is not to be confused with immaturity.

*A mature person is not preoccupied with his own biology.* Early in life, a child exhibits an extraordinary interest in his bodily processes and the various parts of his anatomy. His world is small and each new discovery is of prime importance. He plays with his toes and may even put them into his mouth. He is fascinated by his own movements. He touches his genital organs. Excretion becomes a process in which he finds not only pleasure but also, on occasion, a source of pride.

This stage is usually transitional. As the individual grows older, other interests should supersede his interest in his own anatomy and physiological functions. His interest should take a mature form and his bodily parts should appear to him in adult perspective.

Nail-biting is in many cases as immature as thumb-sucking. Excessive interest in taste and temperature or too great attention to slight disorders of bodily processes, which seem to be drastic symptoms of serious disease, are sometimes indications of immaturity. The great majority of boys and a large percentage of girls resort to sexual self-stimulation (autoerotism, masturbation) at one time or another in childhood. As the individual matures, he outgrows the practice. If it becomes a fixed habit extending into adulthood or late adolescence, the person manifesting it may be considered immature.

*He has an integrated personality.* His life is focused. There may be several focuses, but they are more or less constant. If they change, they do so gradually and in orderly fashion. They do not shift. Within the mature personality there is a minimum of friction but not to the point of stagnation. In choosing a career, in going to college rather than to work, in making a choice of husband or wife, in spending money, normal people experience conflicting motives. In the mature person these conflicts are eventually resolved. The person typified by permanently conflicting motives and perennially clashing drives is like the proverbial man who leaped upon his horse and rode off in all directions. Such a case follows.

A woman now thirty-five was outstandingly successful in her college days and had high academic ambitions. She loves her husband and children and wants her marriage to be successful and her home attractive. But she has never been able either to choose between the academic and the domestic roles or to work

out a compromise between them. Her life is a series of partially blind dashes. For a while she takes work at the university and neglects her home. Then there is a period during which she neglects her academic work and becomes ultradomestic. There is continual trial with seemingly continual error. The same conflict of drives is noticeable in her pursuit of other interests, such as music, sports, hobbies. She never carries anything to completion. Her life is typified by indecision, with slight, short-lived thrusts first in one direction then in another, like the flare-ups of interests found in a young adolescent.

A mature person has an attitude toward sex, love, and marriage compatible with adulthood. *He is heterosexual.* He is interested in and associates with individuals of the opposite sex as well as his own. He is at ease in a segregated group, a mixed group, or one in which he is the only representative of his sex. He finds satisfaction in normal adult sexual life.

In his early life a boy may be so completely identified with his mother that his emotional life becomes feminized. He may be so attached to his father, whom he admires and worships as a hero, that the father becomes the pattern for his future love objects. Parents who wanted a boy and had a girl may attempt to make her seem like a boy and so distort her development that she focuses her love interests on other girls instead of on boys.<sup>1</sup> For various other reasons an individual's love interest may remain in a preheterosexual stage. In some extreme cases such an individual may be classified as homosexual. In most student cases it is not only safer and more hopeful but also more nearly accurate to classify the individual as preheterosexual or immature. The term *homosexual* implies fixation; *preheterosexual* implies a stage of development, perhaps retarded, which will eventually be superseded by more mature heterosexuality. There are also cases in which two persons of the same sex are unusually closely associated because they feel inferior, shy, or lonely. They readily turn to anyone who will give them companionship and security. In such instances there may be no homosexual element whatever. There may even be no indication that the individuals are what we have termed preheterosexual.

<sup>1</sup> RICHMOND, WINIFRED, "An Introduction to Sex Education," pp. 165-166. Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1934.

Promiscuity, so often taken to be an indication of sophistication and modernity, is a symptom of immaturity because it indicates that a monogamous attitude has not been reached. Promiscuity implies uncontrolled sexual freedom and is not synonymous with frequent dating. The latter before marriage is highly desirable when intelligently controlled. But remaining too long in the dating stage is immature. The reader's attention is again called to the fact that students are not expected to have reached the full limits of maturity. For them dating is both normal and desirable. To interpret this paragraph as an argument for too-early, too-hasty marriage to prove maturity would be to go beyond common sense.

*He carries into marriage the desirable elements of courtship but not the elements of uncertainty.* The couple's joy in each other's company, thoughtfulness, attentiveness, expression of affection, the giving of gifts are desirable both before and after the wedding. When a woman "keeps a man guessing" before marriage, she invites pursuit, protects herself while she is in the process of making a choice, and adds to the "spirit of the chase." For either spouse to continue such behavior after marriage is to undermine the other's security, for there is an assumption that the marriage vows involve a permanent decision and the ceremony is a symbol of a change in status. Such a person is likely to rationalize his conduct by saying that this is the only way to keep the other interested. Eagerness to hold the spouse's love is commendable; but there are more mature ways of doing it. One way would be so to develop one's personality that its depth is never quite plumbed, to have so many interesting and stimulating facets to one's life that one never grows dull. The husband or the wife who is "all surface" or who reaches the state of settling down to monotonous mediocrity may fail to keep the interest of the spouse. It is growth and new experience, not uncertainty, that produce security and permanence in marriage.

Just because so many couples do settle down to surface experiences, do cease growing, do become satisfied with mediocrity, and do lose their spontaneity, young persons sometimes get the impression that courtship is more interesting and more thrilling than marriage. Nothing could be further from the truth, when the possibilities of both are fully explored.

*He is adequately prepared for marriage.* There are regional and class differences as to what constitutes adequate preparation. That needed by a college graduate who will live a complex life in a progressive urban center is not the same as that of the unschooled, naive person who dwells in a backward community. Since success in the former's marriage depends upon the utilization of well-developed personal resources, he is not ready to assume what is obviously an adult role if his social and emotional growth has been stunted.

### EARLY MARRIAGE

Let us define as early marriage that in which the couple are about twenty, or younger. It is not synonymous with hasty marriage. Early marriage entails a number of problems and considerations.

*There is the problem of maturity.* Are the couple mature enough to marry at this early age? Physically they may be, but are they in other respects?

*The earlier the marriage occurs, the more likely is it that there will be an overemphasis on sex and physical attraction.* The physical aspects of marriage are important, are desirable, and are to be expected; but they are by no means all of marriage. There are many other important aspects; and the younger the persons are, the more they are inclined to be swept away by the surging desires that they experience.

*Are the couple ready to have children?* They may be ready biologically; they have reached sexual maturity and are physically prepared for reproduction. But among modern educated young people there is more to having a family than merely the biological process. Babies cost money, and to rear them as the couple will want to rear them requires maturity and preparation, security of both present and future, and a readiness to devote oneself to them.

*Are the couple prepared to maintain an acceptable standard of living?* Is the man ready to make sufficient income to support a wife and a home? If the wife plans to work for wages, is she trained for anything but a routine job? What would happen to their plans if she had a baby?

*Have persons so young had adequate time to make a wise choice of mate?* Furthermore, since people change considerably during

their late teens and early twenties, there is the danger that the husband and wife may grow apart as their tastes and attitudes are altered.

*The earlier the marriage occurs, the less likely the couple are to have reached a monogamous attitude.* As we saw when we examined emotional development, an individual is first interested in the opposite sex in general and gradually narrows down that interest to one person. If a couple have reached this monogamous stage, it is one thing. If they marry when they merely like each other a bit better than they like several other persons, it is quite another.

*Will the couple have had ample opportunity for social development before accepting the responsibilities of a home and a possible family?*

### COLLEGE MARRIAGE

Marriages in which both persons are undergraduates, in which the man is an undergraduate and the girl is out of school, in which the girl is an undergraduate and the man is out of school, in which one or both is in a graduate or professional school, all present different problems. In this discussion we shall limit ourselves largely to the first type, namely, that in which both persons are undergraduates. The second and third types are difficult to generalize upon except as some aspects of them are similar to those of the first type. The fourth type, too, is difficult of generalization, since age, maturity, economic security, the time interval between marriage and degree are all so variable. Each such marriage must be considered individually.

To many undergraduate marriages the considerations mentioned above in connection with early marriage apply. In addition to these, there are others depending largely upon the fact that the couple are students rather than upon their age.

*There is the problem of the couple's completing their formal education.* It is true that in some cases being married helps students to work more effectively and that their grades improve. In other cases, however, it does not work out so fortunately. The couple contemplating marriage while still in college must reckon the possible costs as well as the possible gains. In some instances, the girl develops a "don't care" attitude. "Why," she reasons, "should I do all this work and suffer through tests

and papers when I shall not use what I am studying? I'm going to start housekeeping soon and shall not even need my course materials to hold a job." In some cases the girl carries this attitude so far that she leaves school. The wife may also feel impelled to stop school in order to support herself and her husband while he finishes his training, since his education seems more important than hers in the light of their future together. If she stops and he continues, he may eventually get so far ahead of her that she feels left behind.

The husband may feel under obligation to stop school and go to work in order to support the wife and give her the things she has been used to having. It is quite true that dating and being engaged produce stress and strain for the student, and there is often a considerable problem of sexual control. Some of this is eliminated by being married. On the other hand, there is another problem too often overlooked, namely, the effect of tradition upon the husband's attitudes. He feels not only economic pressure of the traditional husband-must-support-wife type but also a social responsibility for her. He does not relish seeing her sit at home at night while he studies, and the pressure may be great enough to make him neglect his work. This is not true in all cases; but it is a possible problem and must, therefore, be taken into consideration.

*There is the problem of the ever-possible baby.* Many young couples who think themselves modern and sophisticated assume that they will not have a baby because they know something about contraception. In trying to decide whether or not to marry while in school, they frequently do not take a baby into consideration at all. The omission is so complete that mere mention of baby throws a new light upon the problem in the student's mind. Babies are the result of biological processes, not the result of good intentions; and people do have them. The best laid plans of married undergraduates may be completely upset by a child. Consider the combination of good intentions, wishful thinking, lack of foresight, and sketchy planning in the following case, which is not atypical.

A girl of eighteen is engaged to a boy of twenty-two. She is in the latter part of her second year at college and he has before him three more years in a professional school. Her parents pay her expenses and give her a \$20 monthly allowance. His parents

give him an allowance so small that he must work for his board and room. The couple want to marry in about three months and hope that their parents will continue their allowances. His parents are willing to agree to the marriage but hers wish her to wait at least another year. The two are quite sure that they are deeply and permanently in love. Their plan is this. After the wedding he will continue his training. She will carry some university work, get a part-time job, and keep house. By their own confession, they have not even considered the possibility of having a baby. The mere suggestion of this possibility throws new light upon their plan. Fortunately, they are sensible enough to see the point and reconsider their future, but not without a great deal of inner struggle on the part of both and some tearfulness on the part of the girl. It is difficult for them, as for many others, to withdraw and remake plans which, from the distorted perspective of romance, seem so rosy but which, when reconsidered from the practical point of view, seem so full of risk.

Usually a pregnant girl must withdraw from school. It is quite unusual, to say the least, for a girl to have a baby and get a diploma in the same spring. The husband may feel obliged to stop school and go to work in order to support his family. If he remains in school, there are almost sure to be continual worries about expense and, in some cases, requests for parental aid, which may be humiliating.

If one or the other does have to stop school, there is always the danger of projecting blame later in life. Suppose, for example, the husband stops school and takes a job, which turns out to be a blind alley. He sees men who were his classmates getting ahead of him. His inferiority irks him; and he searches for someone or something to blame for his plight. Unconsciously he will try to blame someone or something other than himself. If he projects the blame onto the wife, there may be conflict and tension that will seriously affect the marriage relationship. If he projects the blame onto the child, he may grow to resent the baby; and the father-child relationship may be colored by his attitude.

The probability is that if the couple exercise care and intelligence they will not have a baby. However, if in only one case out of several there develops the situation we have suggested above and that case happens to be yours, the reader's, it makes no difference what the statistics are. Your life and that of your



husband or wife are changed. Below is quoted, with fictitious names, a newspaper article announcing the marriage of two college students. The girl was a sophomore, the man a junior. They were married secretly in September, and in February the girl found herself pregnant. The whole problem is epitomized in the tense of the verb *attend*.

February 18.

Mr. and Mrs. John Doe of ——— announce the marriage of their daughter, Helen, on September 27 in ——— to Mr. James Smith. The bride attended ——— College; the groom attended ——— University.

*There is the problem of support if the couple remain in college.* If the persons have independent incomes or are working their way through school, they may be able to manage, provided that they have no baby. Although two cannot live as cheaply as one, two can live as cheaply as, or perhaps even more cheaply than, twice one.

In this connection much is being written and said about parental subsidy of college marriages. The argument is that, if the parents are willing to give their children allowances so that they may attend college, those same parents ought to be willing to continue the allowances if the children marry. Opponents of parental subsidy argue that this course tends to pauperize the couple if they grow to depend upon it; that it is often the opening wedge of parental interference in the marriage; that, traditionally, married couples are expected to be independent. Proponents argue that it will not pauperize young couples if the parents voluntarily subsidize them, if all persons concerned are intelligent about it, if there is a definite time limit to the subsidy. They argue, further, that with education extending for a longer period than ever before we must adjust to the new circumstances. Some suggest that, instead of providing full subsidy, the parents agree to assume the responsibility for unlooked-for expenses, such as those of illness or the cost of a baby. Others recommend that early in the child's life the parents take out insurance that will yield a small income at about the age of marriage.

Whether parental subsidy of college marriage is desirable or undesirable is still an open question. In some cases it has worked out well; in others, poorly. In only a small minority of cases has

it been tried. Whether it is good or bad, whether it should be more common or less common, the fact remains that at present few parents favor it. The young person contemplating marriage while still in college must face the reality of the present, not the hopes of the future. Unless he is sure of his own parents' willingness and ability and the willingness and ability of his fiancée's parents to subsidize a contemplated marriage, the reader would be buying a grab bag if he married and depended upon the continuation of allowances for support.

Subsidized marriage is not something new and untried. There is some reason to believe that in this country the present period is the first in which marriage has not been subsidized. In earlier times, a girl usually entered marriage with an ample hope chest and often with a dowry. When a man married, his father gave him some land, stock, and equipment, and friends and relatives assisted in the building of his house. This was a form of subsidy and it worked—a fact that neither proves nor disproves that the same plan would be satisfactory in our present-day money economy.

*The attitude of the college administration must be considered.* Various attitudes and rulings are to be found: undergraduate marriage is thought to improve academic work or thought to make it more difficult; married students are permitted to attend or not permitted to attend; they are allowed to live in dormitories or not allowed to do so; in rare instances dormitories for married students are provided. Whatever the situation may be in your particular school, it must be taken into account in deciding whether or not you will marry while in college. Some of the most secret of secret campus marriages have been known to leak out, often with dire consequences for one or both of the couple concerned.

*If the couple attend different colleges in widely separated towns, there is the problem of dating.* Many students find it trying to be left out of things because they do not date; and in not dating they miss an important part of college life. One cannot attend a "prom" alone or with one's roommate. To date when one is married may cause one's spouse more worry than he is willing to admit and not infrequently creates tensions that have a serious effect upon the marriage. Furthermore, it is likely to give the student who does it a not too-desirable reputation if the fact

of marriage is known. If the college administration's attitude is such that the fact of marriage may be made public and the student dates only occasionally and for some special purpose or event, such as a "prom," and then dates only someone who is a mutual friend of the couple and with the consent of the husband or wife, it is possible to carry it through. But there is a great element of risk. To date without the spouse's knowledge is not only deceitful and a violation of trust but also an invitation to disaster.

*The girl must decide whether she will be a drag upon her husband or an inspiration to him during the latter part of his training and the early part of his career before he is solidly established.*

*If the couple attend different schools, there is the danger of reacting to the halo effect produced by distance and by separation.* The question then becomes: Do you really want to marry now and do you really feel ready for it? Or does the strain of separation and loneliness cast such a halo around marriage that it seems like a glamorous and exciting escape from your present situation? Distance does lend enchantment. It is likely to make one exaggerate the good qualities of another person while one minimizes or forgets his poor ones. It is likely also to exaggerate the romantic aspects of marriage while the responsibilities are overlooked. Lastly, it is likely to accentuate the unpleasant aspects of one's present circumstances.

*The undergraduate is often wont to feel that by postponing marriage he misses something; hence he cannot wait.* But by marrying while in school he gains nothing that he would not gain if he waited two or three years. The wedding, the honeymoon, the first years of marriage may be experienced later as well as earlier. He does gain the satisfactions of the intervening two or three years, but he gains them at some risk. There is the danger of mortgaging the future for the present.

*Undergraduate marriage often entails parental objection.* Although parental objection may be insufficient reason for permanently remaining single or for refraining from marrying a particular individual, it is something to be taken seriously into consideration in marrying while in college. It means much to a couple to have their parents look with favor upon their marriage. Parents, in some cases, might two or three years hence favor a marriage that they now oppose, because by the later date the

couple will have become more mature, will have finished their formal education, will be more certain of their choice, and will be able to look forward to a future better secured.

There are instances, too, in which tuition is high and at the beginning of each school year parents undertake the obligation for a whole year's fees. If the college does not permit married students to attend and the student marries and must, therefore, leave school, the parents lose a substantial sum of money. Naturally they do not look with pleasure upon such an eventuality and often feel that the child is ungrateful.

*If marrying while an undergraduate necessitates withdrawing from college, there is the danger of being considered a quitter.* It may not be justified, but it is very easy for parents and relatives, friends and classmates to misunderstand. They may even put the cart before the horse and think of the marriage as an escape from academic failure rather than as the cause of withdrawal. If untoward circumstances develop during the marriage, it is not impossible for even husband or wife to consider the other a quitter.

*There are, no doubt, compensations for marrying while in college.* One of the chief among them is the satisfaction of being married, the sense of security that marriage gives. This is especially true when students feel that, if they wait until both finish training, they will have to postpone marriage five or six years. They sometimes forget, however, that it may turn out that they will marry before so distant a future date and do so with a better start than they can get by marrying as undergraduates. Fellowships, awards, assistantships, part-time jobs, inheritances, and any of a number of other factors may operate to shorten their period of waiting.

In the last analysis the decision to marry or not to marry while an undergraduate should rest upon the answers to three very simple questions: (1) What is to be gained? (2) What are the risks? (3) What is to be lost? There is a tendency for the undergraduate who marries to think only of the first question and its over-rosy answer. He feels, if he has thought about them at all, that the other two questions do not apply to him, because he will be the exception. Too frequently he finds to his sorrow that the exceptions are exactly what the word implies—namely, exceptions—and that he is not included among them.

All that we have said thus far about undergraduate marriage applies to students who are contemplating marriage. If the reader is a married undergraduate, he has already made his choice and there is no value in talking about whether or not he should marry. But there is value in pointing out that he has special problems to face. To make his marriage successful he will have to face them and, what is more, solve them with all the intelligence, insight, stamina, and fortitude that he can muster.

### THE PROBLEM OF POSTPONING MARRIAGE

Taking this somewhat negative position with regard to undergraduate marriage does not imply a disregard for the problems involved in postponement of marriage. Young people are physically ready for mating several years before they are socially and emotionally ready for marriage. Many persons are subject to possible confusion on this point. They say that the biological age for marriage and the social age for marriage do not coincide. There really is no biological age for marriage. The biological age referred to is the age for mating. Marriage and mating are not synonymous. This confusion does not alter the young person's problem. It does often help to realize that because one feels the surging urge of sexual desire and because one is physically ready to mate and perhaps even to bear children one is not automatically ready to enter a relationship of which the physical aspects constitute only a part.

In a civilization such as ours, and especially in better educated groups, relationships tend to be complex and marriage makes rather heavy demands upon its participants. Periods of cultural and vocational training are being lengthened. Economic self-sufficiency is not simple of achievement. Personality is coming to play an ever-larger role in the lives of husbands and wives. As a result, marriage tends to be postponed for some time beyond the achievement of physical and sexual maturity. We might say that social and emotional maturity tend to lag behind physical maturity. This period of postponement is one of stress and strain, emotional incompleteness, frustration, physical repression, and intellectual confusion for myriad young people, among whom the college student is probably the most common and most poignant sufferer. There is doubtless no single problem which

causes the student more worry, which gives rise to more inquiries, which more frequently tempts to experimentation or trial-and-error methods than this. It affects his relationships with persons of the opposite sex and his social relationships in general. It frequently affects his grades and his vocational choice. It creates an unprecedented parent-child problem for which the solution up to date has been little more than conjecture. It is something new in history to have so many young people dependent or partially dependent upon their parents for so long after becoming physically mature. The result is a considerable and distressing overlapping of a too-long-continued parental attitude toward the child, as if he were still an adolescent, and the attitude of the child as a young adult who seeks independence but remains partially on a dependent-child status.

It is easy to say that society should do something to solve this problem. Butterfield voices the opinion of many writers in saying:

When neither youth nor parents are able to exert any helpful influence on the situation, a radical change in economic or moral structure seems inevitable. Either society will have to remodel its economic structure to make conventional marriage possible to young couples, or there will certainly come a change in the marriage mores. Either of these changes involves so many radical aspects as to earn the term "revolutionary," yet anything less than that is not likely to give help. It would seem that only some form of "new deal" which will make marriage economically possible for the majority of young people in the early twenties will avert a continued increase in adolescent tension with respect to marriage and premarital sex behavior.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that society should do something about this problem. But society has not done anything. The economic structure and the institution of marriage change slowly and are more sensitive to basic evolutionary forces than to theory and injunction. If we learn anything from history, we must see that for years to come the reader of this book and thousands like him will face this problem of the postponement of marriage before society does anything about it. This does not mean that we should cease trying to improve the social situation. It means

<sup>1</sup> BUTTERFIELD, OLIVER, "Love Problems of Adolescence," p. 125, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1939. Reprinted by permission of Emerson Books, Inc.

only that in our zeal for reform we should not lose sight of present reality. Is there anything that the individual may do to contribute to the solution of this problem in his own particular case? We have no easy, ready-made solution but we can offer a few possibly useful suggestions.

*The young person who must postpone marriage should face reality.* His problem is to make the best adjustment he can to the situation as it exists rather than to make a poor and inadequate adjustment because he feels the need for social change. His adjustment to the marital situation is in many ways similar to his adjustment to life in general. The economic system is not all that it should be; there is inequality of opportunity, inequitable distribution of wealth, and all too frequently insecurity of savings and investments. Yet we work and save and invest to the best of our ability. Medical science is not perfect, but we live as healthfully as possible in the light of incomplete knowledge. The political situation is not what we should like to see it, but we do not, therefore, fly off on tangents. The individual's problem is to find the greatest happiness and satisfaction over a long period. The fact that society makes serious errors does not foredoom the individual to equally serious errors, if he intelligently faces his handicaps. Railing against the system does not make it any more possible for one to marry sooner or more successfully.

*The individual should realize, as we have already intimated, that the age for mating is not necessarily the age for marriage.* He may be physically and sexually mature. But is he ready to marry and assume the inevitable responsibilities and fulfill his marital role? Sometimes the desire for sexual experience is confused with the wish to marry. If a young couple plan permanently to "live on love," they need consider nothing but the factor of sex and its attendant emotions. If they are to have meals together, have a home, rear offspring, maintain a standard of living, and take their place in the community, they must consider something more than the physical.

*Sexual freedom is no solution.* Too often sexual freedom begun as a stopgap to carry over until hopes may be realized and plans fulfilled becomes a permanent obstacle to the achievement of those very hopes and plans. Such freedom is not an adequate and satisfactory substitute for marriage, even when

on a temporary basis. As we have already seen, promiscuity is immature; marriage is for the mature. One does not enhance his maturity by continuing his immaturity. Let us repeat, too, that the mature person forgoes present pleasure for future happiness.

It is difficult for normal, healthy, vigorous young people to be sexually content for a long period after physical maturity is reached. That some of the best things in life are difficult is a truism. Some of the things most worth while are things for which one must struggle, strive, prepare, sacrifice, and on occasion fight. Education, vocational success, principles, and many other things fall into this category; and among these things, in the attainment of which are involved effort, foresight, and preparation, is successful marriage. Successful marriage must be won. It must be built. It is not a gift of nature and is never reached by the path of least resistance.

*Every individual is subject to the necessity for making choices.* If he attends one college, he cannot at the same time attend another. If he chooses one career, he automatically eliminates others. If he spends money for one thing, he cannot spend it for something else. If he chooses to get a college education, he has made a choice that involves certain benefits but also certain costs. He cannot have his education with its future returns and at the same time have the immediate returns that would be derived from choosing to go to work rather than to school. If he intends to have a college education, he must be willing to forego some things until his education is completed.

*As we suggested in a previous connection, the individual may think of the present as part of a larger picture.* From the perspective of thirty or forty years of marriage, the present postponement will not seem so long, even though at the moment it may seem interminable. The present may be looked upon as preparation for the future, rather than as an infringement upon it.

*He may think forward to near events.* By shorter steps he may bridge the period of waiting rather than let his interest in near events become beclouded by a fog of immediate hopeless anticipation, through which he can see only the remote star of his very distant marriage.

*He may do things for his marriage.* As a preparation for marriage, he may with his fiancée plan apartments or houses, or



work out budgets. There are many things that a girl may make ready—household linens, for example. In this way a couple may bring a little of the future into the present. Many of these things done by them separately or together act as tension relievers.

*He should be certain that he does not compare the best parts of marriage with the worst aspects of his present situation, forgetting that there are probably bright spots around him if he only opens his eyes to them, and that there are responsibilities in marriage, especially if it is too early, or premature.*

#### CONSIDERATIONS WITH RESPECT TO LATE MARRIAGE

It is somewhat difficult to define what is meant by late marriage. We might say that it is marriage in the late twenties or in the early thirties. Instead of attempting to fix a definite time limit, let us say only that the later the marriage occurs, the more the following considerations will probably apply.

As persons grow older, their habits tend to set. Like concrete they become rigid, lose their flexibility and adaptability. They are less able to adjust to new situations. Since living with a husband or a wife creates a new situation requiring mutual adjustment for its success, the older the couple are at the time of the wedding the less likely they are to adapt to one another. But this is not the equivalent of saying that the younger they are the more likely they are to adjust successfully. The older they are, too, the less likely they are to assimilate the marriage into their personalities and the more probable is it that they will remain "old maids" or "old bachelors," even though they have had a wedding.

If a person waits too long to marry, or rather to decide to marry, he may find that the most desirable persons of the opposite sex within his acquaintance are already married, and he will have to lower his standards or else accept someone who has been married before.

Persons who wait too long and do not marry until they are both well established vocationally and financially, may experience difficulty in adjusting their standards of living to a single income if the husband insists upon the wife's stopping work or if she becomes pregnant. They may also be so well established that they lose valuable experience in working and planning together.

They have struggled separately in order to achieve, but that is not the same as working together for common goals.

The individual who waits too long may have the habit of sexual restraint so deeply set that he cannot overcome his inhibitions.

There is the problem of having children and adjusting to their presence and care and also the possible problem of the parents' being too old to be proper companions for the children.

### WHAT IS THE BEST AGE FOR MARRIAGE?

This chapter, which started with the above question, we shall close with an attempted answer. We have divided the concept of age into five components—chronological, physical, mental,

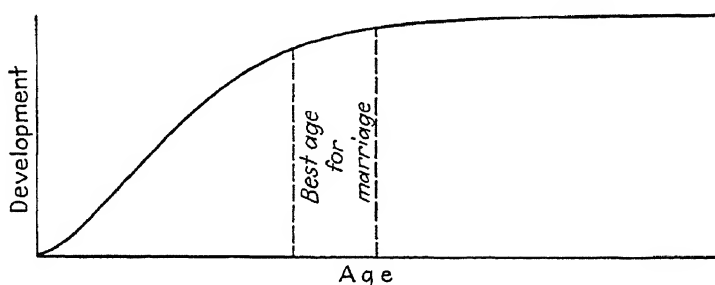


FIG. 2.—The best age for marriage.

social, and emotional—and have discussed these rather fully. We have also discussed early marriage and late marriage. Our general conclusion has been that so far as success in marriage is concerned the question of the best age for marriage is one of how far the individual has progressed in his development, rather than the number of leaves he has torn from the calendar. The situation is not dissimilar to that of a student entering college when he is prepared, rather than when he reaches a given age. The above concept has limitations, because people tend to think in terms of chronological age, and that age is most easily measured; and it applies only to marriages in which both persons are of similar chronological age. One would hesitate to recommend the marriage of a person of twenty to another of forty, no matter how relatively mature the former or how immature the latter. In such cases calendar age is extremely important.

If an individual's development were plotted on a graph, the graph would appear roughly like that in Fig. 2. This figure is

oversimplified and makes no allowance for the fact that one aspect of development may lag behind others or may be precocious. Relative change is rapid at first. As the person grows older, each year finds him changing less as compared with the previous year, so that the graph tends to level off. Between the first and the second year, for example, the change is tremendous. Between the fiftieth and the fifty-first, the relative change is slight although the time period is identical. The best time to marry is represented by that segment of the graph where the curve begins to level off but has not yet reached the level stage. It is the age at which the individual has become relatively mature, the period of most rapid change is passed, the habit patterns that will characterize him for life have begun to form, but the process is not complete, habits are not entirely set, and the individual is still adaptable enough to adjust to a new situation. For most persons whose development has been more or less normal and in whom there is to be found a fairly close correlation between chronological age and other types of age, this period is the twenties. That is to say, for normal people some time in the twenties is the best age for marriage. If there are unusual circumstances affecting the individual's development, the best age for his marriage may be different from that for persons in general. Here again the demands of the group in which one lives must be taken into consideration. If in a particular group teen-age marriage is the norm, then that constitutes an unusual circumstance that partially vitiates our generalization.

The *best age for marriage* suggested above corresponds roughly with the median ages for marriage as found in census statistics. When the ages at time of marriage for all persons in this country are arranged in order from lowest to highest, the middle or median age for women is approximately 22.4 and that for men 25.6 years.<sup>1</sup>

In discussing maturity and the age for marriage, students almost always ask: "Must one be fully mature in every respect before he marries? Is anyone ever completely mature?" A person need not be fully mature before he marries. He should, however, be closely approaching maturity and should certainly be on the right track and moving in the right direction. He should be far enough along in his progress to be able to predict

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census, 1930, Population, II, p. 838.

what he will be like when he does reach maturity. He should be relatively mature in the things that are most essential, taking the marital situation and the personality of the other person into consideration. We cannot say that a person who marries when he is approaching maturity stops there. He will continue to grow and mature in marriage as well as before. Whether or not anyone is ever completely mature is difficult to say. In nature and in human life most things are relative rather than absolute. All we can say is that some people are much more mature than others.

## CHAPTER VI

### CHOOSING A MATE

A wise choice is "half the battle." It is safer and easier to choose well and to match personalities than to attempt to alter them after the wedding. Change may occur through experience, self-effort, or the influence of one's spouse; but it can take place only on the foundation of personality traits present before it began.

Personality traits are types or phases of behavior. They are abstractions deduced from observation of concrete, overt acts. Traits themselves have no actual existence within an individual. His behavior does not express his traits; his behavior *is* his traits. Changing those traits is not a process like that of changing one's clothes, taking off one garment and putting on another. It is, rather, a process of change in behavior, which entails the development of new habit patterns. As a rule people do not like to be changed, especially when the suggested alteration implies inferiority and they are made the subject of a reform program concocted by someone else.

Each of a person's traits is relative to all others and is manifested against the background of his total personality. None ever stands alone, isolated from the rest of the individual. Besides, traits are not always consistently constant. A person may exhibit a given trait under one set of circumstances but not under another. He may, for example, be honest when he is trusted but dishonest when subjected to suspicion. He may control his temper at home but lose it on the golf course.

The same trait may appear in different light as circumstances vary. If a man has fought his way to the top in business, we must expect him to be aggressive. Aggression, however, is more acceptable at a meeting of the board of directors than at the family dinner table. Absorption in his work may be commendable in a man; but if he cannot escape it long enough to spend some time with his wife or friends it becomes an annoyance

rather than a virtue. An individual cannot be two personalities simultaneously—one with his wife and family, another with other persons. If he seems to be so dually constituted, it is because the basic traits in his personality appear differently under different circumstances.

### QUALITIES OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

It would be an interesting and perhaps provocative exercise to attempt to list all the qualities desirable in a husband or a wife. The end result would probably be an inventory of all the virtues and some of the vices, depending upon one's point of view, of which the human race is capable. Our difficulty in presenting such a list would be that we should be attempting to catalogue the desirable traits to be found in husbands and wives in general. Actually, there is no such thing as a generalized husband or wife; there is only some particular woman's husband, some particular man's wife. It is useless to talk about the qualities of a spouse until we answer the question, "Whose spouse?" The qualities held to be desirable are variable and depend upon the personality and ideals of the individual making the choice. Qualities are not absolutely desirable or undesirable. They are relatively so and are weighted according to the hopes and expectations of the maker of the list.

One author asked a thousand couples to state types of behavior that they felt contributed to the success or failure of their marriages. In the published list of those items most frequently mentioned are to be found such things as "She always has meals on time. She sews very well. . . . She always has clean clothes for me to wear. She washes my back. He helps me with the dishes. He loves nature. He does not overtell old jokes. He gladly rubs my back."<sup>1</sup> The list contains many items more commonly desirable than the ones quoted here. These are cited to show how weighted by individual points of view the qualities considered desirable in a husband or wife may become. It is apparent at a glance that for one man whose marital happiness rests to an appreciable degree on the washing of his back there must be thousands who are quite content to make their toilet singlehanded.

<sup>1</sup> Burkhart, Roy, "From Friendship to Marriage," pp. 85-88, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1937.

We suggest, therefore, that the reader carefully and thoughtfully make the following study. (1) List in writing all the qualities desired in a husband or a wife, as the case may be—all that come to mind or that may be suggested through discussion or reading. (2) Select the ten most essential qualities from the list. (3) Rank these ten qualities from most important to least important. (4) Go through the entire list again and mark with a plus sign those qualities which he himself has, with a minus sign those which he does not have or which he needs to develop further, with a zero those that a spouse of his sex cannot be expected to have, but for which he may substitute the correlative quality pertaining to his sex. (A man is not expected to be a good homemaker; he is expected to be a good provider.) This will call to his attention what he has to give in marriage as well as what he hopes to get. The use of personality rating scales may be helpful if the results are interpreted by an expert, but they are not to be used indiscriminately by amateurs.

No matter to what extent romance may seem to have created the illusion, no one has ever yet found a perfect spouse. No man or woman will have all the good qualities included in the reader's list. This is fortunate, because anyone aware of his own limitations must realize that to have a perfect spouse would give rise to an inferiority feeling, which would make wedded life unbearable. No one need be pessimistic because he cannot find a perfect mate. Rather should he be optimistic, because happy marriages can be made by persons like himself who fall somewhat short of the ideal. Successful marriage is not a matter of two faultless human beings finding each other. It is a matter of the mutual adjustment of two persons possessing good qualities, but considerably less than perfect, who are willing to work for success.

Some other objectives in making the list of qualities suggested are added here.

1. It may serve as a frame of reference in the light of which possible husbands or wives may be judged. This is, to be sure, a rough standard and the technique of analysis is not scientifically refined. But we do "size up" people, and it is well to have some sort of matrix in which to form a judgment. If the reader thinks through his list carefully, his future judgments may be affected, even though he does not consciously recall the list while associating with other people. It is not necessary to carry a

notebook and pencil—if we may exaggerate to make the point clear—and to check off qualities as they are observed, in order to improve one's choices. Neither does one need to assume the proverbial attitude of the Canadian Mounties, who always succeed when they set out to "get their man."

2. The list should make the reader realize that individuals of opposite sex have many personal qualities in addition to the few that first attracted attention. Judgment should be based upon all those qualities, not upon a limited number only. Those that are fundamental, as well as those that are superficially apparent, should be taken into consideration, so that the individual may be judged as a whole personality. One of the most serious limitations on campus courtship is the fact that college life, being somewhat controlled and restricted, does not afford opportunity for the observation of an individual's total behavior.

3. Listing the qualities desirable in a husband or a wife may play some part in assisting the reader to marry with his "head" as well as with his "heart," if we may so express it. To marry with "heart" only is to be swept away by romance. To marry with "head" only is to be cold and calculating. In making marital choices, just as in adjusting to life in general, a combination is needed.

In choosing a mate further considerations are also important, such as (1) The type of person one wants. This person may be either a reflection of an ideal or the individual with whom one has already developed an emotional attachment. (2) The type of person one needs; that is, the person one can best get along with, who will complement one's own personality and round out one's life, who will prove stimulating, who will afford emotional and economic security, and with whom one can maintain a desirable standard of living. (3) The type of person one is likely to be able to get. In this connection we are making no necessary implication of superiority or inferiority but only of difference, and we do not mean necessarily that one's standards should be low. Individuals who fall in love with married or engaged persons, who in hero-worshipping fashion fill their day-dreams with visions of movie stars or other celebrities to the exclusion of more mundane contacts, who seek to attract persons who are obviously not interested in their particular type, who refuse to consider any but a very wealthy mate—these and



numerous others are thinking only in terms of what they want and overlooking the important question of what they will probably be able to get. But this does not prove that they are inferior.

In some cases, however, individuals do have higher aspirations than their personal assets seem to warrant. Less attractive persons have the same sort of impulses, hopes, and ambitions as more attractive ones, but they do not always have an objective point of view with regard to their own traits. They do not see themselves as others see them. In some cases awareness of their unattractiveness makes them more than ordinarily eager to win an attractive mate in order to compensate for their own feeling of inferiority. But being eager to win such a mate is not the same as winning him. Not infrequently the unattractive person makes himself unhappy and discontented because he persists in shooting at a target that is out of range.

Here is a clear-cut, though unusual, instance. Few girls have such scanty personal assets as the one in this case. She was physically, aesthetically, and socially unattractive, as well as intellectually unstimulating. Hence she had difficulty getting dates. The result was that she became "boy crazy" and petted very freely in order, as she thought, to make boys date her more than once. By some means she had a "blind" date with a boy who was several years older than she, very intelligent and popular, and working for an advanced degree. He was kind to her and dated her a second time. She immediately began to think in terms of marriage and to wonder how serious his interest was. When he did not ask her for another date, she worried and fretted. For several weeks she sat at home, shutting herself off from other contacts, waiting to hear from him. When the counselor understood how far beyond her personal assets her aspiration had gone, she was helped to readjust herself.

A more serious type of case in which the individual wants someone that he cannot get is the one mentioned in an earlier chapter in which an individual takes a "her or nobody" attitude and goes through life disappointed, despondent, and disillusioned because the person of his choice refuses to marry him.

It may seem that this discussion presents choice of a mate as if it were a one-sided procedure, such as buying an automobile. Naturally it is not so, since both parties make a choice simultaneously. When one buys a car, the car has no choice. After

the purchase there is adjustment on only one side, namely, that of the owner, who must adapt himself to the vehicle in order to drive it. The car's characteristics are fixed and no adjustment is possible. After the choice of a mate, however, there is an extended process of mutual adjustment, and there are mutual as well as individual satisfactions at stake. If this mutuality breaks down, what may have appeared to be good choice becomes more like appropriation. A successful marriage cannot be built upon a foundation so one-sided as that.

A good choice may be "half the battle," but it is only half; it is the beginning not the end of marital adjustment. The situation is not dissimilar to that found in choosing a vocation. No matter how wise one may be in making a vocational choice, no matter how well he is adapted or prepared, there still remain many adjustments to be made and much work to be done before that vocation becomes a successful achievement.

One chooses a mate not only for the immediate future but, in most cases, for life. Therefore, the qualities to be sought should be those that will stand the test of time and contribute toward the couple's happiness in years to come as well as during the honeymoon and the exciting freshness and adventure of the first few months after the wedding.

Choice involves not only the personality of the other person but also things associated with him, the circumstances under which the couple will live, the demands of the husband's vocation, the place of residence, and the type of in-laws. This is more true of a woman's choice of husband than of a man's choice of wife, because the "long arm of the job," his job, reaches so far into their private lives. Marriage to an army or navy man, a physician, a clergyman, a business-man, a farmer, a traveling man, a schoolteacher involves circumstances so obviously different as to require no further explanation. Each also places a different responsibility upon the wife as companion and helpmate to the husband, for a wife does make a contribution to her husband's vocational success or failure, although she may not always be fully aware of this. This contribution would be of one kind for the wife of a clergyman, for example, but of quite another for the wife of a farmer. The husband's vocation also plays a large part in determining the couple's status in the community. For this reason there is a tendency for the wife to assume the social

position of the husband rather than vice versa. In thinking of marriage to a particular man, any woman would find it well worth while to make a careful analysis of the circumstances under which she would live and the demands that would be made upon her, and then frankly to ask and sincerely answer the questions, "Can I adapt myself? Have I the equipment to succeed under these circumstances? Will I be happy in this type of life twenty years after my wedding?"

**Other Qualities.** In two rather extended studies of marital adjustment certain significant factors have come to the fore. Space and the nature of this book prohibit mention of more than a few of the generalizations at which the investigators arrived. Readers who are interested in examining the statistical data on which the conclusions were based are referred to the original publications.

On the basis of his study of 792 couples Terman concludes that

Happily married women, as a group, are characterized by kindly attitudes toward others and by the expectation of kindly attitudes in return. They do not easily take offense and are not unduly concerned about the impressions they make upon others. They do not look upon social relationships as rivalry situations. They are cooperative, do not object to subordinate roles, and are not annoyed by advice from others. Missionary and ministering attitudes are frequently evidenced in their responses. They enjoy activities that bring educational or pleasurable opportunities to others and like to do things for the dependent or underprivileged. They are methodical and painstaking in their work, attentive to detail, and careful in regard to money. In religion, morals, and politics they tend to be conservative and conventional. Their expressed attitudes imply a quiet self-assurance and a decidedly optimistic outlook upon life.

Unhappily married women, on the other hand, are characterized by emotional tenseness and by ups and downs of moods. They give evidence of deep-seated inferiority feelings to which they react by aggressive attitudes rather than by timidity. They are inclined to be irritable and dictatorial. Compensatory mechanisms resulting in restive striving are common. These are seen in the tendency of the unhappy wives to be active "joiners," aggressive in business, and overanxious in social life. They strive for wide circles of acquaintances but are more concerned with being important than with being liked. They are egocentric and little interested in benevolent or welfare activities, except insofar as these offer opportunities for personal recognition. They also like

activities which are fraught with opportunities for romance. They are more inclined to be conciliatory in their attitudes toward men than toward women and show little of the sex antagonism that unhappily married men exhibit. They are impatient and fitful workers, dislike cautious or methodical people, and dislike types of work that require methodical and painstaking effort. In politics, religion, and social ethics they are more often radical than happily married women.<sup>1</sup>

Happily married men show evidence of an even and stable emotional tone. Their most characteristic reaction to others is that of cooperation. This is reflected in their attitudes toward business superiors, with whom they work well; in their attitude toward women, which reflects equalitarian ideals; and in their benevolent attitudes toward inferiors and underprivileged. In a gathering of people they tend to be unself-conscious and somewhat extroverted. As compared with U [unhappy] husbands, they show superior initiative, a greater tendency to take responsibility, and greater willingness to give close attention to detail in their daily work. They like methodical procedures and methodical people. In money matters they are saving and cautious. Conservative attitudes are strongly characteristic of them. They usually have a favorable attitude toward religion and strongly uphold the sex mores and other social conventions.

Unhappy husbands, on the other hand, are inclined to be moody and somewhat neurotic. They are prone to feelings of social inferiority, dislike being conspicuous in public, and are highly reactive to social opinion. This sense of social insecurity is often compensated by domineering attitudes in relationships where they feel superior. They take pleasure in the commanding roles over business dependents and women, but they withdraw from a situation which would require them to play an inferior role or to compete with superiors. They often compensate this withdrawal by daydreams and power fantasies. More often than H [happy] husbands, they are sporadic and irregular in their habits of work, dislike detail and the methodical attitude, dislike saving money, and like to wager. They more often express irreligious attitudes and are more inclined to radicalism in sex morals and politics.<sup>2</sup>

The above descriptions apply to husbands and wives as they were found to be and are based partly on the subjects' self-analysis. The traits mentioned may be the result of marital adjustment or they may be factors contributing to it. It is diffi-

<sup>1</sup> Terman, Lewis M., "Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness," pp. 145-146, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1938. Reprinted with permission.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

cult to be sure that the cart and the horse are in their proper positions. The descriptions apply also to persons who were happy or unhappy in their marriage, rather than to the persons who made someone else happy or unhappy. The study is based on a large group; there is no allowance for individual difference in the summary way in which we lifted the above excerpts from their contexts. Nevertheless, one may safely assume that in many instances the traits mentioned contributed to marital happiness or unhappiness for both parties and that, therefore, these traits are worth considering, at least in making marital choices, provided that adequate allowance be made for individual situations and desires and the adjustment of two persons, rather than the description of two groups.

Terman also concludes that background circumstances are frequently the bases upon which marital success may be predicted. Among these background factors those that he considers most important are (1) The happiness of parents. There seems to be a direct correlation between parents' marital happiness (as estimated by children) and the happiness of the children's own marriages. Individuals whose parents were or are happy in marriage are more likely to have happy marriages. (2) Childhood happiness. Persons who had a happy childhood are more likely to be happy in marriage than persons whose early years were unhappy. (3) Lack of conflict with mother or father. (4) Home discipline in earlier years. The most favorable type was firm but not harsh or too frequent. (5) Amount of attachment to mother or father. (6) Parental frankness about matters concerning sex. (7) Premarital attitude toward sex that is free from disgust or aversion.

He concludes that the "subject who 'passes' on all . . . of these items is a distinctly better-than-average marital risk."<sup>1</sup> The reader is cautioned against leaping to unwarranted conclusions on the basis of this brief summary, especially if those conclusions seem to "prove" what he had previously hoped. Our purpose in mentioning this study is not to give the reader an absolutely infallible method of predicting success in marriage or a ready-made means of making a wise choice, for at the present stage of knowledge that is impossible. Our purpose is to call to his attention items that are worth considering in making a choice;

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 372 *et passim*.

but that choice must ultimately be based not upon a printed scale but upon an intelligent understanding of the total individual situation.

In their study of 526 couples, Burgess and Cottrell<sup>1</sup> stress the importance, among other things, of (1) background factors, such as a child's relation to his parents, the happiness or unhappiness of the parents' marriage, and the relation of the child to his brothers and sisters, and (2) the degree of socialization of the individual, that is, his education, his religious activities, the number and sex of his friends, his participation in social organizations, his conformity to social rules, his respect for convention, his stability of character.

**Physical Attraction.** Physical attraction is important in choosing a mate. We do not wish to give the impression that it can safely be disregarded. Nevertheless, it is very obtrusive, overshadowing other considerations more often than being overshadowed by them. In choosing a mate, one cannot depend upon sex appeal alone, or too much, or too long. Most men and women are married to beings whose exterior falls somewhat short of the classic beauty of Venus or Apollo, yet they are often happy in their relationships. Increasing age is bound to have some effect upon youthful appearance. There are so many aspects of marriage just as important as the physical that it is essential to keep the latter in its proper perspective.

In spite of our emphasis upon the fact that the qualities deemed desirable in husband or wife are heavily weighted by individual hope and expectation, there are traits and circumstances so commonly influential upon marital success and failure that we may discuss them and call attention to the importance of taking them into consideration.

**Health and Medical Examination.** Health is an important consideration. Although one may not choose another just *because* of a healthy body, he may refrain from choosing someone because of lack of health. At any rate it is important for both persons to know what they will have to face in marriage so far as health is concerned. For this reason each one should have a medical examination before marriage. The function of such an examination is fourfold: (1) to ascertain the state of general

<sup>1</sup> BURGESS, ERNEST W., and LEONARD S. COTTRELL, JR., "Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage," Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1939.

health and to point out, if necessary, any symptoms that might affect the couple's choice or their future conjugal relationship; (2) to discover defects or details of anatomy that might affect the couple's sexual adjustment; (3) to discover, if possible, any anatomical characteristics that would make it inadvisable for the woman to become pregnant; (4) to give the couple an opportunity to talk over their marriage and their initiation into it with the physician and to have their questions answered.

The purpose of the medical examination is not—as is often supposed—entirely negative, that is, to prevent the marriage of the unfit and perhaps to make it advisable for two persons who are in love to relinquish the idea of marrying, and thereby cause pain and heartache. Its chief purpose is to assist the better marriages in getting a better start and to enable the best-matched couples to make the best possible adjustment.

**Hereditary Traits.** In choosing a mate, one chooses not only an individual and his relatives but also, in a sense, his more distant ancestors insofar as he exhibits hereditary traits or carries them in his germ plasm with the possibility of passing them on to his children. Consequently, the question of heredity is important. This matter not infrequently comes to the attention of the counselor via the worries of some person in love who is concerned about the advisability of marriage or parenthood, because of either his own hereditary constitution or that of the other person. Cases such as the following are not unusual. A girl is contemplating marriage to her second cousin and, upon examination of data concerning their backgrounds, finds that haemophilia (a tendency to uncontrollable bleeding, carried in the mother's germ plasm but exhibited only in sons) has cropped out several times in their family line. The boy himself is not affected. Would it be safe and wise for them to marry? A girl is engaged to a boy who seems to be quite normal but whose younger brother exhibits behavior suggesting feeble-mindedness. A girl has a maternal uncle (mother's brother) and a second cousin on her father's side who seem to her to be feeble-minded. Should she marry? Would her children be feeble-minded?

Reliable data on human heredity are not so plentiful as one might wish. Those that are most uncontestable apply to such traits as eye color, skin color, supernumerary fingers or toes. The average young person, however, wants to know about the inher-

itance of such things as insanity, feeble-mindedness, cancer, tuberculosis, syphilis, and criminality. Sometimes the data are conclusive, sometimes inconclusive. There are frequent apparent exceptions. The whole matter of human heredity is more complex than the arithmetic ratios of coat type in guinea pigs or color in peas, usually employed to illustrate Mendelian laws to the beginning student, might lead one to suppose. So many human "traits" are not simple. They are complex combinations of traits that result from multiple hereditary determiners acting together, and they are eventually manifested in a social environment. The problem is so complicated and ramifies in so many directions that in this book we can do no more than touch upon a few very broad generalizations and then make a suggestion.

In a sense, there is no such thing as insanity. There are only symptoms of mental disorder which are grouped in various ways, making possible classification of mental diseases. These symptoms range all the way from the most severe to those that are but slightly accentuated traits of normal persons. There is evidence<sup>1</sup> showing that some of these symptoms may be inherited; but the process is not simple. There is a considerable environmental factor. Let us assume that a descendent of mentally ill ancestors has inherited a tainted nervous constitution, a predisposition to mental maladjustment. Under one set of environmental circumstances he may not be able to make a good adjustment and may become mentally ill. Under another set of circumstances his adjustment may be near enough to normal to enable him to develop a reasonably well-balanced and integrated personality. On the other hand, even though his ancestors, either remote or immediate, showed symptoms of mental disease, the child may be normal, because the ancestors' disease was the product of environmental rather than hereditary influences. Parents, however, form part of the environment of a child, and mentally ill persons usually do not make good parents. They are likely so to

<sup>1</sup> See MYERSON, ABRAHAM, "The Inheritance of Mental Diseases," The Williams & Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1925; BLACKER, C. P. (ed.), "The Chances of Morbid Inheritance," H. K. Lewis and Company, Ltd., London, 1934; ROSANOFF, AARON, "Manual of Psychiatry," John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1927; SCHEINFELD, AMRAM, "You and Heredity," Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, 1939 (an excellent nontechnical treatment of the subject); and HENDERSON, D. K., and R. D. GILLESPIE, "A Textbook of Psychiatry," Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, London, 1932.



affect the child's development that he will seem to have inherited their mental symptoms, whereas he has acquired them just as he learned to speak their language, reflect their tastes, follow their political leanings, or adhere to their religion. To state it thus is an oversimplification and gives an impression that the facts were all known. All we are trying to say is that, although in some cases mental disease is inherited, in others it is not, and in still others children exhibit disease symptoms because they have lived with diseased parents.

The evidence for the inheritance of feeble-mindedness is perhaps somewhat better substantiated. But feeble-mindedness may be due to other factors besides inheritance, such as injury or conditions in the prenatal environment of the child. When it is inherited, it seems to act as a Mendelian recessive, that is, a trait that is not exhibited in the offspring unless the child receives determiners from both parents. Yet it is not a simple recessive. None of us knows what recessive traits we carry in our germ plasm unless we exhibit them or have seen them exhibited in children, although we may make tentative deductions on the basis of our knowledge of our family trees. The children of feeble-minded parents do not invariably exhibit the defect. On the other hand, parents of normal intelligence may have feeble-minded children, the feeble-mindedness being due either to environmental factors or to the fact that each parent carried the trait recessively. In consanguineous marriages (marriages of so-called "blood relatives") there is a common ancestry and the chances of both parties' carrying recessive traits is increased; but in consanguineous marriages no traits are produced that were not already in the germ plasm. So we may conclude tentatively that if a given marriage be not consanguineous and the couple know of no incidence of feeble-mindedness in either line or if there is very scanty and doubtful evidence, such as a single case among one party's relatives, and the parties themselves are of normal intelligence, the chances of their children's exhibiting inherited feeble-mindedness are very slight and marriage and parenthood need not be feared.

The student who has little knowledge of psychology often confuses insanity and feeble-mindedness. The distinction may be clarified by a rough illustration. Imagine two telephone switchboards. One is too small to take care of all the calls that come

into the office. The other is amply large to handle all calls; but, when calls come in, there are certain areas on the board in which the plugs are always put into the wrong holes, either because the wiring is incorrect or because the operator continually makes the same errors. In the first case the equipment is not adequate. This is like feeble-mindedness, in which the individual's mental equipment cannot handle the load that his environment imposes upon him. In the second case, the equipment is adequate in the sense that the board is large enough and there are enough plugs, holes, and wires; but calls are always sidetracked because the equipment is not functioning properly. This is like insanity, in which the individual's intelligence is normal but there are certain patterns of response and behavior, as if certain stimuli-plugs were always put into the wrong response-holes.

Tuberculosis cannot be inherited because it is an infectious disease, that is, a disease produced by bacteria, and a child cannot inherit bacteria. Since the disease is contagious, he may contract it from his mother or his father, but that is not the same as inheriting it. He may inherit a susceptibility to tuberculosis; and this susceptibility varies in different individuals. Most of us inherit a susceptibility for most infectious diseases; few of us are immune until immunity has been acquired. Hence, the situation with regard to tuberculosis is not dissimilar to that with regard to other germ diseases. The same is true for syphilis, although this disease seems more readily to infect the unborn child than do most germ diseases. The data on the inheritance of cancer are still inconclusive. Some authorities maintain that cancer may be inherited; others maintain that it may not. Certainly, at the present stage of knowledge, there would not be sufficient grounds for breaking an engagement merely because in one or even in both parties' families there were a few scattered cases of cancer.

Criminality is so largely determined by environmental factors that, so far as this discussion is concerned, we may assume that it is not inherited. It often does accompany mental disease or mental deficiency, but not by any means invariably so. Criminals, like the mentally ill, do not make good parents. Consequently, the children of criminals may lean toward crime. To fear marriage to an individual in whose family there were one or two lawbreakers is quite unnecessary, provided that the indi-

vidual himself is a good citizen. The chief consideration in such a case would be the actual or imagined social stigma attached to the person or his family.

Hereditary traits are passed down to us not only from our immediate ancestors but from all our ancestors. Many of us would probably find wormy fruit on our family trees if we examined them carefully and traced back far enough. The purpose in saying this is not to minimize the importance of heredity or to pass lightly over those cases in which it is a serious consideration with regard to a given marriage. Our purpose is rather to remove some of the unnecessary fears with which persons looking forward to marriage are sometimes plagued.

In deciding whether or not to marry an individual in whose family line there are known to be defects which may possibly be inheritable, or in case there are such defects in one's own line, a distinction must be drawn between the advisability of marrying and the advisability of having children. If the individual with whom marriage is contemplated is himself free of the defect, then marriage may be safely planned, unless the defect is of such nature that it may be manifested later in life. If the individual manifests the defect, then the decision must be made with this knowledge in mind. If he does not manifest it but there is reason to believe that he carries it in his germ plasm and may pass it on to his children, then marriage may safely occur, provided that adequate steps are taken to prevent conception. These steps should be taken only upon the advice of the best medical specialist available to the couple. There are also cases in which inheritable defects may be corrected. When this is done, marriage may be reconsidered.

In any case, the solution to the problem lies in knowledge and intelligent planning, not in worry. Worry over the inheritance of defects sometimes causes more damage than the defects themselves. It is conceivable that worry might precipitate mental illness which is not inherited and which the individual would not have acquired if he had not worried lest he had inherited it. Worry that a defect will be exhibited by one's children often leads to expecting that it will be manifested and to such continual "reading into" the child's behavior that the environmental stage is set for his developing the trait one hopes he will avoid. This could readily be done with criminality, for instance. The

child might live up to his parents' expectations and become delinquent.

If there is reason to believe that one party has in his family line a questionable hereditary trait that might make marriage or parenthood inadvisable, there are four things to be done before a final decision is made. (1) Gather all available information about the individual's background. (2) Submit the data to the best authority available, telling the whole truth insofar as this is possible. Students are especially fortunate in this connection because they may submit the data to an instructor in a marriage course, in biology, in psychology, or to the college physician. Since for so many questions of inheritance there is no ready-made answer, it is advisable to get the judgment of more than one expert if possible. (3) Draw a careful distinction between traits that would make marriage inadvisable and those that would make parenthood inadvisable. (4) When the judgment of the experts has been communicated to the couple and accepted by them, the latter should consider it carefully, to be sure that they understand it and all its possible implications and ramifications, then draw their own conclusion, make a plan for the future, adhere to it, and stop worrying.

**Common Interests.** Common interests are an important consideration, and it is in most cases desirable that the couple have some. It is also important that they have individual interests, for these may be stimulating and add zest to their relationship, provided that they are acceptable to the other party. When such interests are not mutually acceptable, they may wedge a couple apart instead of drawing them together. A hobby may be an intruder instead of a binder.

The more enduring common interests are, the more important they are likely to be in marriage. Pursuit of them must also be sincere and well-founded. Sometimes in order to advance the courtship process, one individual will superficially take up the interests of the other, only to drop them again after the wedding and thereby dissolve what the other person had assumed would be a bond between them. This temporary pursuit of an interest is not always insincere, as the individual may confuse interest in the other person with interest in what that person does. One of the best tests of supposedly common interests is to compare them in retrospect, that is, before the two individuals met, as well as after.

Common dislikes as well as common likes may draw a couple together at first, but dislikes are too negative and too much something to avoid rather than to pursue to take the place of common interests in marriage.

**Standards of Conduct.** A disparity in standards of conduct is important, because it indicates a serious variation in attitude toward something that at least one of the couple considers a value. Difference in attitude is often accompanied by difference in behavior, and this may be fertile soil in which to grow the seeds of friction. There are things of such nature that difference in attitude and behavior with regard to them may cause serious and even irremediable conflict. These should be carefully considered in making marital choices. One of these is sexual freedom after marriage. Another is honesty, interpreted broadly. A third is the use of alcoholic beverages. The reader may add others.

No matter what one's personal views upon the use of alcohol may be, and no matter what the degree of his indulgence from total abstinence to dipsomania, the fact remains that there is the assumption of possible risk in marrying an individual addicted to the habitual and excessive use of intoxicating liquor. The behavior of such a person is not readily predictable. His assumption of responsibility may be haphazard or intermittent. His behavior may upon occasion prove embarrassing or humiliating. Friendships may be limited. Social activities may tend to be restricted, because such an individual often leans toward those that have an alcoholic accompaniment or injects a sometimes unacceptable alcoholic element into the activities of more temperate groups. If the person uses alcohol in order to escape problems, to bolster his courage, or to remove inhibitions and make himself more sociable, then in many cases the risk is increased, because the indulgence is a symptom of immaturity, fear, feeling of inferiority, or some equally significant underlying difficulty, which may militate against the success of the marriage both directly as an undesirable personality trait and indirectly through its alcoholic disguise.

In contemplating a marriage in which there is a difference in standards of conduct, an individual should answer one important question to his own satisfaction: What does this difference mean to me? If he lets judgment become clouded by romance, he may make an unwise choice that will not stand the test of

time. If he depends upon reforming the other person after marriage, he is falling into the trap of wishful thinking. It often happens that the person with the lower standard drags the other down rather than that the person with the higher standard raises the other.

**Economic Element.** Marriage contains a rather ample economic element, and this should be taken into consideration in making choices. Most women expect their husbands to be able providers; most men expect their wives to be skilled homemakers. Either has difficulty in proving economic proficiency before marriage; and this difficulty is often greater among college students than among others because of the circumstances under which they live. In the case of students, perhaps the most important characteristic of the girl in this connection is an attitude of interest and willingness to acquire skill in her economic role. If she has opportunity to get some training in it while in school, so much the better. The most important characteristic of the boy is a combination of adequate vocational training and ambition. The couple may marry on a meager income; but, if the boy is well trained and ambitious, they may stake their future on his potentialities as well as on his achievements up to date.

**"Likes" and "Opposites."** Proverbially, "likes repel, opposites attract," as if human beings were the poles of a magnet and their behavior were governed by relatively simple forces. Such a broad generalization might easily be carried to ridiculous extreme. If opposites attract, then the intelligent should marry morons, large persons should marry small ones, college students should marry illiterates, black should marry white. If likes repel, similar interests, values, temperaments, or backgrounds would produce discord rather than harmony. Husband and wife should have complementary rather than clashing characteristics, enough similarity to be mutually agreeable and enough dissimilarity to be mutually stimulating. Even this is a broad generalization. In the last analysis all depends upon the two personalities involved and their mutual adjustment. In some cases likes, in others unlikes, have very happy marriages.

There are combinations of traits, however, that merit caution. We may mention a few by way of illustration. The reader may supply others as his amorous inclinations lead him to consider possible matrimonial choices and their attendant problems of

adjustment. Two leaders may conflict. Two followers may stagnate. A leader and a follower may make a good adjustment or may irritate one another. We say *may* instead of *do* because much depends upon the individuals and no dogmatic generalization is universally applicable. Two even-tempered individuals may get along smoothly and happily or they may prove too unstimulating to each other. Two quick-tempered persons may continually clash. If they harbor grudges they may ruin their marriage. If they quickly recover and forget and forgive, they may make a satisfactory adjustment. A practical individual may or may not get along with a dreamer.

With human nature so variable and so complex and with the final judgment to be made by the reader anyway, we might never strike exactly the combination of traits that is in his mind as he thinks of his possible union with some particular person. We cannot even go so far as to say that it is always essential that the husband be masculine and the wife feminine, although this is the most commonly accepted and expected type of "opposites" that attract. It is better to suggest to the reader that he make his own careful analysis than to give him the impression that a short list of generalizations will pigeonhole his particular problem and yield a ready-made judgment. Furthermore, it is not only the difference or similarity in one or a few particular traits that counts, but all the traits of each person. A sense of humor may offset the danger inherent in a quick temper, a lovable disposition may counteract the irritating impracticality of the dreamer.

**Choosing a Mate Like One's Parent.** Not uncommon is a tendency to seek a mate like one's father or mother, as the case may be, the parent of opposite sex having been an adolescent ideal. It may be well to desire that a husband or a wife possess some of the admirable qualities of one's parent, and the latter's qualities may form a good basis upon which to found an ideal that will grow as time goes on. But to set up one's parent as an ideal and to insist that one's spouse conform is to establish an impossible standard and to set an unattainable goal, for several reasons. There are no two persons exactly alike. Your parents and your future spouse were born in different cultural eras. The former are also some twenty to thirty years ahead in their development. Twenty-five years from now your husband or wife may be more like your father or mother, but at the moment it is impos-

sible to eradicate the age difference. Furthermore, you do not know firsthand what your parent was like when he or she was the age of your future mate. You cannot say with any degree of accuracy whether you would have been attracted to each other then or not. Because your parents love one another and have a happy marriage does not prove that you could duplicate their experience with one of them. In order to live with your father as your mother has, you would have to be your mother rather than yourself. In many cases it is not the actual qualities of the real person that are set up as the standard, but rather the idealized image of the parent.<sup>1</sup> Actually, not even the individual himself completely attains this unreal standard. Naturally, then, no other person could logically and reasonably be expected to attain it.

If a child's relationship with the parent of opposite sex has been unpleasant, he may seek a mate having quite different qualities. This is understandable and not unreasonable, as long as he allows for difference of degree in various personality traits and realizes that traits may be exhibited differently under varying circumstances, judges by the whole individual, and knows at least in part which of his parent's traits were present at the time of marriage and which developed because of the marital situation.

**Qualities of a Date.** The qualities desirable in husband or wife and those desirable in a date are not always or necessarily identical. In dating there is a tendency for some of the more superficial and inconsequential qualities to play a more prominent role. For example, the ability to dance is put more into the foreground in judging a date than in judging a husband. A date is expected to be a free spender, but he need not be vocationally ambitious. In dating it is more important for a girl to be attractive in appearance than to know how to keep house. More than a thousand Stephens College students were asked to list the qualities that they liked in a date, and those that they desired in a husband. Heading the first list were such things as ability to dance, ability to carry on a conversation, good manners, attentiveness, consideration, pleasing personality. In the other list the qualities most frequently mentioned were such things as companionship, ability to provide, understanding of wife, love, ambition in his vocation, intelligence.

<sup>1</sup> ELLIOTT, GRACE LOUCKS, "Understanding the Adolescent Girl," pp. 51-52, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1930.



Somewhere in the welter of each individual's personal attributes are those traits that will contribute most abundantly to his success or failure in marriage. They may not be fully developed in the earlier part of the dating period. A youthful individual must be judged by his possibilities as well as by his achievements, provided that one does not confuse observation of possibilities with wishful thinking and the other person does not expect possibilities permanently to substitute for actualities. Like saplings, these traits and potentialities of husband or wife may be partially shaded and hidden by the already grown trees and underbrush of more readily apparent traits of dates. To seek them out and clear the land around them so that one may see the nature of the growth that will form the new forest, as well as the components of the present one, is the process of intelligent choice of a mate.

**Do College Girls Make Good Wives?** Sometimes in student discussion groups the question arises as to whether college girls make good wives. The answer depends upon whether the adjective is used as good or "good." If by "good wife" is meant a woman who conforms to the traditional wifely pattern of home industry and unrestricted reproduction, a woman of semisubmissive disposition and quasi-inferior status, we must admit that college girls do not make "good wives." If, however, the term implies intelligent copartnership and understanding companionship, intellectual stimulation and cultural enrichment, then college girls do make "good wives."

The commonly uttered superstition that men like women to be less intelligent than themselves has little basis in fact. Men date the "beautiful but dumb" type of woman more often than they marry her. Masculine ego being what it is, highly colored by tradition, men may not like women to seem more intelligent than themselves, and certainly they do not like women who flaunt their intelligence and education in men's faces to "prove" feminine superiority and masculine inferiority; but they do not like unintelligent wives.

College girls do not make "good wives" if they do not overcome the training for competition rather than cooperation that they are given in some schools; nor do they if they are taught to think of marriage and homemaking as something beneath the dignity of the woman with a degree.

## REASONS FOR POOR CHOICE OF MATE

Many of the factors making for poor choice of mate are implied in the reasons for which people marry, as set forth in Chap. II and in subsequent discussion. Confusing infatuation and love; hoping to reform the other party; judging by too few qualities; marrying before tastes and attitudes are well developed; over-emphasizing money; and acting under the stimulus of rebound, spite, habit, pity, and similar attitudes are obviously contributory to errors in judgment. Among other factors are those that follow.

Some persons make a poor choice of mate because they marry in haste—to repent at leisure and perhaps in misery. Less care and intelligence may be exhibited in choosing a husband or a wife than in selecting new garments. Marrying the first person who asks the question, without waiting for experience broad enough to give ground for comparison and contrast, sometimes makes for poor choice. This does not mean that the first person is invariably a poor choice. It suggests only the exercise of caution and judgment and a clear understanding of the fact that it is false to assume that if the first person is not accepted, there will be no other.

There are individuals who are not sufficiently conversant with the requirements of marriage. They do not understand what marriage involves, not realizing that it is a most intimate relationship and that there are responsibilities as well as pleasures. Some go so far as to think only up to, rather than beyond, the wedding or even to think of marriage as if it were a lifelong date.

Marrying to please one's family rather than oneself is usually full of risk, since the individual rather than the family has to live with the person chosen. In some cultures where more emphasis is put upon institutional factors in marriage, such as support, protection, reproduction, and less upon personal factors, such as companionship and love, families may make better choices than individuals, since what is sought is stability, rather than satisfaction. In our culture, where the personal factors are held in such incomparable esteem, only the individual himself can make the final choice, although he may of course give weight to his family's opinions.

The marriage of childhood sweethearts does not always turn out so satisfactorily as storybooks lead one to suppose. The common assumption is that, if persons have known and liked each other since childhood, they must know each other well enough to marry successfully. In some cases this is true. The couple have developed along parallel paths and, in spite of contacts with other persons, they find each other most attractive.

In other cases, however, childhood sweethearts marry because they have been afraid of people and have lacked social experience. They cling to their earlier choice because their fear or lack of contacts prevents their making another. Such persons are emotionally immature and, in a sense, theirs is a child marriage. Since marriage is for adults rather than children and should be the outgrowth of adult experience, and since it succeeds or fails to the degree to which it can survive in an adult world, the marriage of such childhood sweethearts is sometimes a precarious one. It may not fail in the sense of disintegrating or ending in divorce; but it may fail in the sense of falling far short of the possibilities of which marriage is capable. For a similar reason, cousin marriage is sometimes ill-advised. Disregarding for the moment the biological considerations in connection with consanguineous marriage, if relatives are attracted to each other because they have been thrown together, have known each other from childhood, and are too shy or too fearful to make wider social contacts, their marriage falls into a class similar to that discussed above.

A girl of nineteen felt that she was in love with her first cousin. Although they had known each other all their lives, they had dated only a few times. He was not only eight years older than she but was also much more mature in his behavior, and they had somewhat divergent tastes and points of view. It was apparent that the girl was pushing the affair more than the man was. This was probably due to the fact that she had always been able to get along with children and older people but was shy and afraid in the presence of persons of her own age. In her cousin she found an older man with whom she could feel more secure and someone with whom the first steps in the development of a friendship had already been taken. The probability is that marriage to him would have been insecure, not only because of his personality but also because of her own attitude and the basic reason for her interest in him. After they were married and the

original reason for her turning to him was removed, their relationship might not have been so mutually agreeable as her insecurity led her to believe.

In one sense, everyone who marries does so to escape something as well as to achieve something. He wants to escape the various unpalatable factors in his unmarried state. But to marry to escape circumstances unusually unpleasant, such as an unhappy home situation, the irksomeness of earning one's own living, or the demands of a school program not to one's liking, when the factor of escape carries more weight than the relationship with the other person, is a precarious basis upon which to make a choice of mate. One case will serve to clarify the point. The parents of the girl in this case were divorced when she was an infant. When she was ten years old, her mother married a man addicted to the use of alcohol. The daughter never got along with him. There were frequent quarrels, especially when he had been drinking, and there was perpetual ill feeling. The girl had for some time felt a desire to leave home. At the age of seventeen she became engaged to two boys and accepted rings from both. Because she could not make up her mind as to which she loved more, she wavered between them. Usually she was partial to the one present. Her decision was made for her when one of the boys left town. Soon afterward, she married the other. An impersonal observer could recognize almost immediately that the girl was deeply infatuated with both boys and not ready to marry either. Her desire to escape from home was so great that she could not resist and blindly made her choice.

Marrying merely to satisfy an urge to marry rather than a desire to marry a particular individual may lead to poor choice, because requirements are relaxed.

**Choice Difficult Today.** Choice of a mate is more difficult today than it was in the past. Present-day standards are less well defined and more flexible. People do not fit so readily into a previously determined, traditional social mold; their roles are not as clear-cut as formerly. There is also, today, a wider range of acquaintance among young unmarried persons and more freedom of speech and action in their relationships. There is less social and parental control of courtship and choice. The growth of cities has tended to decrease neighborhood and community control. The development of the automobile and of

commercialized amusements has made it easy for children to be far removed from direct parental influence in a very brief time. Some persons go so far as to say that the automobile has replaced the family parlor as the scene of courtship activities. People contemplating marriage have different standards today from those maintained by our ancestors. The latter tended more to seek the economic and institutional virtues, such as support, protection, domestic skill, procreation. We tend more to seek the personal virtues, such as love, companionship, pleasing personality. These latter qualities are more difficult to judge. All this has, among others, one result that every young person looking forward to marriage must consider if his choice is to be intelligent: the responsibility for choice is put more directly upon the shoulders of the individual and less upon society and relatives than ever before in history.

**Parental Objections.** Burgess and Cottrell<sup>1</sup> in the study already mentioned found that parents' approval and successful marriage adjustment tended to go hand in hand, while in cases in which there was parental disapproval there was a higher percentage of poor adjustment. It is essential to ascertain first the nature of the objection. Do the parents insist upon lifelong celibacy, or do they object to the child's marrying now or in the near future? As we have said, they may later approve of a marriage to which they now object because of the age element involved. Or is opposition due to the fact that they do not approve of the individual chosen? They do not like him or they feel that he will not be the sort of spouse that they wish their child to have.

When parents object to marriage at any time, there are only two alternatives. One is for the child to acquiesce in his parents' wishes and remain celibate for life. This is too much for parents either to request or to expect. Sometimes they sincerely believe that the child will avoid unhappiness by remaining single. They assume that the child will have the same marital disappointments that they had. At other times their wish to have the child remain celibate is entirely selfish, although they may not be aware of that fact. They want the child to remain with them, to keep the family intact, or to take care of them in their old age or infirmity. The other alternative is for the child to marry

<sup>1</sup> BURGESS and COTTRELL, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-171.

against his parents' wishes. Before he does so, however, he should be sure of his decision and know that he is mature enough to take a step so drastically affecting his relationship with his family.

If the parents object to their child's marrying now or soon, it may be worth while to wait a bit longer, especially if the child is of about student age. It means so much to a young couple to have their parents on their side that a brief wait may prove a good investment in future happiness. At times a student's parents object so strongly to his marrying now that their objection overflows and spreads to his dating, especially if he wants to go steady or become engaged. Such a student often fails to understand his parents' attitude. The parents, on the other hand, fail to understand that the student's talk about marriage does not make the wedding so imminent as it appears, and the probability is that their fear that he will run away and marry or do something equally rash is not well-founded. The parents' motives are good. Because of their own experience, cases that they have observed, or their distrust of the judgment of youth, they fear that their child will do something to jeopardize his happiness.

In such cases the child could make his relationship with his parents much smoother and prevent much argument and friction if he would repeatedly reassure them that he is not going to marry too soon, sincerely mean it, and by his behavior prove to them that he means it. The more he argues about the theory of the thing, the more he tries to convince them that it would be all right for him to marry now if he wanted to, even though he has no intention of doing so, the more he attempts to show them that "things are different from what they were when you were young," the more fearful and suspicious they will become. They will wonder whether he is hiding his true feelings and intentions in order to trap them into agreement.

If the objections are not directed against marriage as such or the time of marriage, but apply only to a particular individual chosen, they should not be disregarded until one is absolutely certain that he understands the reasons behind them. If the objections are the outgrowth of prejudice or incomplete knowledge, they may be given little weight if the parents remain immovable, or they may be altered by arranging contacts between

the parents and the individual in question so that the former will see the latter in a different light. Sometimes parents see things that their children, in the throes of romance, overlook. Older persons are often better able to judge those qualities that will further and those that will impede marital adjustment than is the younger person, who has no firsthand experience of marriage. In such cases objections should be given great weight and the opposition should not be lightly dismissed on the basis of wishful thinking or attributed to prejudice, when the disapproval is actually the outgrowth of careful, balanced observation. It is easy to describe a person as biased when his only fault is disagreement with us. Children who term their parents prejudiced often do so because they themselves are strongly prejudiced in the opposite direction. Two persons in love are almost never completely unbiased.

When parental disapprobation is directed toward a specific individual, the child in love sometimes exhibits negativistic behavior. The objections have an effect opposite to that intended; instead of making the love object seem less attractive, they make him seem more so. The young person may be trapped by his own tendencies into confusing his attitude toward the other individual with his reaction against his parents. Since many an ill-advised choice is made for this reason, it might have been included among the reasons for poor choice listed above. Let us examine a specific case.

The girl was a college student with a pleasant personality, who did superior academic work. At a high school party she had met a boy who was a star athlete and, therefore, very popular; but he was a poor student and unrefined. The girl decided then, at that high school party, that he was the boy she was eventually going to marry. After graduation from high school he got a job and she went off to college. They corresponded and saw each other occasionally.

As soon as the girl's parents realized that this affair was not going to burn itself out as others had done, they raised objections. Through a period of two or three years their objections grew into arguments and their arguments generated quarrels, until the family could scarcely be together without suffering violent emotional upsets and venomous recriminations. All three protagonists were obstinate, and their conflicts, instead of

making one side yield, served only to entrench them more deeply in their antagonistic points of view. The daughter was forbidden ever to see the boy. This led only to clandestine meetings.

As the girl's college experience progressed, while the boy marked time, it became readily apparent to an impersonal observer that the two young people were growing further and further apart. Intellectually the girl could see that. She could see that their interests were different. She was aware of the unrefined elements in his personality. She knew that he would never go very far vocationally and his income would always be small. He was a Catholic and her parents were much opposed to his religion, but the girl talked glibly of joining his church. The parents threatened to disown her if she married the boy and she knew they would not attend her wedding. Yet in spite of all this, she felt that she loved him and was determined to marry him in the not too-distant future. The parents by their very opposition were forcing her into a marriage about which even she herself was doubtful in her more lucid moments. In her revolt against her parents she had to have some focal point for her reaction; one cannot revolt in a vacuum. Since marriage to this boy had become the focus for her revolt, she could not retreat.

If the parents had ceased their opposition and let the daughter see the boy as frequently as she wished and let her talk about marriage if she cared to, she would have lost her reason for revolt and would probably soon have seen the boy in his true light and changed her mind. As matters stood, however, it appeared that she would marry him in spite of all the unfavorable factors. If, as the old adage says, forbidden fruit is sweeter, it is not because the fact of its being forbidden raises its sugar content but rather because the person who eats it allows his perception of taste to become affected by his wishful thinking and his satisfaction at having trespassed without being detected and thus having proved himself superior to the individual who bade him let the fruit alone.



## CHAPTER VII

### CHOOSING A MATE (*Continued*)

#### MIXED MARRIAGE

Let us define as mixed a marriage in which there is a considerable, obvious, significant, and unusual difference between the spouses. This excludes sex difference because it is universal in marriage and is taken for granted. In all marriages there are some differences. Many of these if exaggerated would be sufficient to classify the marriage as mixed.

Frequently in a mixed marriage there is more than one element of mixture. There may be difference as to religion, background, and age. Usually there is little hope of changing the elements of difference. The couple, to make their marriage successful, must adjust to them. Too often the young person swept away by romance forgets the first point and assumes that the second is much easier than is actually the case.

Theoretically there is no *type* of marriage that contains within itself the germs of its own inevitable failure. Any *type* can be made successful if the couple face and solve the special problems involved. This is not the same as saying that any marriage can be made successful. At times the *if* is practically insurmountable. There are individual marriages that are hopelessly doomed from the beginning.

In a sense, what was just said about mixed marriage is true of marriage in general. There is no single element that is always present in successful relationships and always absent in unsuccessful ones, or vice versa. Success or failure depends upon one whole personality's reacting with another whole personality and both reacting to the whole marital situation.

In mixed marriage, too, success or failure depends upon total adjustment, rather than upon merely the elements of difference. For example, in a Catholic-Protestant marriage, success or failure depends not only upon the religious difference as such but also

upon the husband's attitude toward the wife's religion and her attitude toward his; upon their personal qualities; upon numerous other elements, such as sex, money, in-laws, children, recreation, which compose the total situation. A mixed marriage presents the problems of regular marriage plus those due to the fact of mixture. In a mixed marriage, as in any other, differences and similarities must be weighed one against the other. In every marriage there are both; success depends upon the relative proportion between them and the weighting given to them.

Mixed marriage presents a problem to both spouses. If a Protestant is contemplating marriage with a Catholic, the former tends to think of Catholic-Protestant marriage as only a Protestant problem. It is just as much a Catholic problem.

Although the success of mixed marriage depends upon the total situation and the two personalities involved, rather than upon only the elements of mixture, those elements sometimes become the focal point for conflict or are blamed for conflict which is due to other causes. Suppose, for instance, that there are conflict and tension between a husband and his wife because their personalities are incompatible. Their ideas, tastes, and habits are so at variance that tension is created. Suppose that to this situation there is added a disparity in religion—one is Catholic, the other Protestant. Unconsciously the couple seek for an explanation of their poor adjustment. From their point of view the simplest, most obvious explanation is the religious difference. Consequently, they fasten upon that. They feel that if they could resolve the conflict over religion their problems would be solved. As a matter of fact, the religious difference is only one among many contributing factors playing a part in their marital disharmony. In almost every case, disharmony, discord, and failure in marriage are the result of multiple causation. There is almost never only one single, simple cause. We must beware of oversimplified explanation.

Let us examine several types of mixed marriage and attempt to ascertain the special problems that they may add to marital adjustment.

#### AGE DIFFERENCE

We shall consider as mixed a marriage in which there is a considerable and unusual age difference between the persons, but

where both parties are old enough to be ready for marriage. This will serve to differentiate marriage mixed as to age, from child marriage. In the latter there may be great discrepancy in the ages of the two individuals, but at least one of the persons is too young and too immature to be ready to marry at all.

Recent news articles mention a bridegroom of seventy-eight and a bride of twenty-six, a man of eighty-two with a twenty-one-year-old wife, a woman of sixty-two who seeks a divorce from her thirty-year-old husband, and a young man of twenty-four who married a woman of seventy-five. These are extreme cases, to be sure. There are many other instances in which the age difference is not so great, but in which the motives and problems are similar. It is difficult to draw an arbitrary line separating marriage with normal age difference from that classifiable as mixed. Some difference, especially toward the seniority of the husband, is not only accepted but usually expected. As was noted in Chap. V, there is a difference of about three years in the median ages of the two sexes at marriage. Let us say only that (1) the greater the difference, the more likely is it that there will be problems; and (2) the greater the difference is in proportion to the ages of the two persons, the more likely it is that these problems will be accentuated. A wife of twenty and a husband of thirty-five would probably find adjustment more trying than a wife of forty and a husband of fifty-five. In either case, the absolute difference is fifteen years; but fifteen is larger in proportion to twenty and thirty-five than it is in proportion to forty and fifty-five.

In connection with marriage mixed as to age, there are three questions to be answered. (1) Why does the younger person want to marry the older one? (2) Why does the older one want to marry the younger one? (3) What special problems are they likely to face?

Many of the reasons for which people in general marry will, when given special emphasis, serve as answers to the first two questions. The desire for emotional or economic security, money, inheritance, social position and prestige, the satisfaction of making a conquest, pity, gratitude—these may motivate the younger individual. Parent attachment and emotional immaturity of such nature that a parent substitute, rather than a husband or a wife, is sought may play a part. If a girl fears

sex or childbirth, she may feel that there is less chance of having her fear realized if she marries an older man. Hero worship may be confused with love.

Either person may have failed to meet an eligible mate of an age more nearly comparable with his own. Either may be subject to flattery. A young woman may be flattered by the attentions of an older man because she assumes that he knows women and the world and has chosen her from among many alluring women whose hearts he might easily have captured. Either may be motivated by a desire to dominate. The younger may accomplish this because of the elder mate's gratitude for having a young person marry him. The older individual may accomplish it because of his age and experience. Such a person may have a parental attitude toward the youthful spouse.

There is sometimes a desire to regain lost youth. This desire may be the rationalization of emotional regression. Recall the case mentioned under regression. There may also be fixation. The older person may have stopped his emotional development at the stage at which he was interested in very young girls. In extreme form, this type of fixation is classified as perversion and is subject to legal penalty. It is legalized to the degree to which we permit child marriage. In its milder forms it may appear as the basic reason for some cases of mixed marriage.

In the case of an older man and a younger woman, there is usually a sexual element. Many older men find younger women physically more attractive than they do women of their own age. This tendency is often accentuated during the climacteric. Although men do not experience a menopause, they do pass through a "change of life" in the late forties or fifties. The changes are not so obvious as those in women, and some men manifest them more clearly than do others. At that period some men exhibit a flare-up of interest in sex, as if they were about to make one last grasp at youth before settling down to older age. A man may be happily and successfully married, and yet for a year or two show a silly and incongruous interest in young women. Usually this interest fades shortly, and an intelligent wife realizes that it is too evanescent a matter to serve as a reason for divorce. If, however, such a man happens to be unmarried, widowed, or willing to destroy his marriage at the time of the climacteric, he may marry a woman much younger than himself.

*What special problems may the couple face?* The greater the age difference, the greater is likely to be the disparity in the couple's patterns of behavior. There may be variation in tastes, in interests, in recreational pursuits, in attitude toward life. If the younger spouse tries to seem as old as the other, it becomes incongruous. If the older one tries to behave as if he were younger, it becomes too obvious.

*There is likely to be a difference in degree of "habit set."* The younger will probably be more flexible and adaptable than the older. As a result, they will not change together or at the same rate. This may necessitate more adjustment on the part of the younger person, while the older one persists in his habitual ways. In the day-by-day contact of husband and wife this may become extremely irksome.

The younger person, while still in the prime of life may eventually have to care for a senile mate. As was stated in an earlier chapter, on the average women live slightly longer than men and wives tend to outlive husbands. In a marriage in which the wife is considerably younger than the husband, she is almost sure to face years of widowhood and it is probable that her widowhood will begin when she is too young to stop living and too old to start over. If she has children to care for, her problem becomes even more acute.

*An older husband may assume a paternal attitude toward his wife.* If there are plans or decisions to be made, he makes them because she is too inexperienced and he feels that he knows what is good for her. He may be impatient with her because of her inexperience. He is not seeking a wife who will be a copartner in all respects. He expects her to fulfill only part of the wifely role. Sharing is incomplete. Consequently, he does not anticipate her taking responsibility for things financial or economic. In some cases she is in slight measure an outsider, who steps into an already functioning establishment and is accepted partly as wife and partly as permanent guest. Some women find this situation difficult to adjust to; they do not want to be patronized. They are likely, too, to feel the sting of public opinion, because they realize that friends are aware of their equivocal position.

*If the husband is considerably younger than the wife, their problem of adjustment during the wife's menopause may be accentuated.*

ated. At that period some women become nervous, change in appearance, put on weight. With the traditional masculine affinity for feminine youthfulness, it is not difficult to see how adjustment in such cases might become complicated.

*There is often a problem with regard to common friends.* The very young wife trying to assume a matronly role in order to fit into a group of women of her husband's age has difficulty, because the older women do not readily accept her as one of their company. The older husband trying to keep pace with the friends of a very young wife has an equally difficult problem. They can scarcely accept him as one of their own companions, and he must often have to force upon himself interest in their recreations. In many cases there is no group into which both husband and wife readily fit as a couple.

*Since tradition is more favorable to the marriage of an older man and a younger woman than to one in which the age difference is reversed, an older wife and a younger husband have the problem of adjusting to an attitude and a public opinion that place their marriage in the category of the peculiar and unusual.* People look askance at them, wonder why they did it, become overcurious.

*There is the necessity of the couple's assuming an intelligent and well-balanced attitude toward their own marriage.* They should, of course, face and solve as objectively and as rationally as possible the special problems involved. But there is danger of putting too much emphasis on the problems and of exaggerating them beyond the limits indicated by the facts.

A seniority of six years on the part of the wife is worth considering; but it is not serious enough to injure a marriage if considered intelligently and without exaggeration. A couple exhibiting such an age difference had known each other for some time, were in love, were both well-educated and well-adjusted persons, had similar interests and backgrounds. The husband, however, started on the wrong tack. Immediately after the wedding he began seeking information as to how to surmount the obstacle in the path of their happiness. He searched through books for suggestions. He asked physicians what to do when his wife reached the menopause. Before two months of marriage had passed, he visited a counseling agency to ask for advice. Fundamentally his attitude was sound. He wanted to attack the problem intelligently and with as much knowledge as he could

accumulate. But he was exaggerating the problem and worrying about it all out of proportion to its importance, until his attitude, rather than the age difference, was rapidly becoming the obstacle to happiness.

In contemplating marriage to an older person who has never married before, a younger individual should be certain that some important questions are satisfactorily answered before the final decision is made. Is there something about him that makes him an undesirable choice? Has he lacked interest in marriage? Is he well adjusted? Has singleness been due to economic factors or factors involving his personality and emotional maturity? How and why did he get so far along in life without marrying? If these questions can not be adequately answered, then marriage may be a risk.

#### DIFFERENCE AS TO SIZE

Tradition decrees and society expects that a man shall be at least as tall as his wife, preferably taller than she is. Girls dislike dating boys smaller than themselves. As was seen in Chap. I, men are on the average taller than women. If, then, a husband is taller than his wife, even though he may be much taller, we shall not consider it a mixed marriage. On the other hand, if the wife is conspicuously taller than the husband, it may constitute a mixed marriage because the difference between them is significant and unusual. The couple may become a source of amusement to other persons. This sort of difference is not infrequently depicted in cartoons and newspaper comics; and people readily carry over their attitude from the comic strip to an actual couple. Saturated with tradition as we are, we are wont to think that anything contrary to custom is either wrong or ridiculous.

A more serious problem, however, is that of the man's own reaction to his size. As we have seen, small men often become domineering, bossy, and egotistical in order to compensate for their size. This tendency on the part of the small man is likely to be accentuated if he marries a woman taller than himself because, with tradition decreeing that he should be the taller of the two, his size stands out in clear relief. Hence, such a husband often becomes domineering and overbearing toward his wife. He orders her about, reprimands her in public, belittles her, and may even take the credit for her achievements.

In other cases, however, a small man may become excessively meek, spiritless, and submissive. Such a man is easily dominated by a larger wife, and this sometimes occurs, making the marriage more or less one-sided.

Many women like a man to be slightly masterful. In discussing this point with numerous groups of women students it was found that in every instance the girls who said they wanted a man masterful or dominating said also that this would be acceptable only if he were taller than they, or at least as tall. They could not accept it in a much shorter man.

#### DIFFERENCE AS TO NATIONALITY

Nationality difference implies variation in custom, standards, and point of view. The greater the contrast in the backgrounds of the two spouses, the greater is the possibility of there being difficult problems of adjustment. If there is also a language difference, the situation is rendered even more complicated.

In some ways difference as to nationality and difference as to family background are similar; but the latter is a difference that occurs in a single matrix of custom, while the former involves the more basic ways of life. Every people believes its accepted way of life to be best and right. It is more or less intolerant of other peoples' ways. In their dealings with each other, peoples set out with preconceived ideas and prejudices. Inevitably individuals tend to reflect the attitudes of the group and many of these have a direct bearing upon the marital relationship.

One of the most pertinent differences between this country and some other nations, as far as marriage is concerned, is the dissimilarity in attitude toward women, in their status, in the degree of restriction placed by custom upon their behavior, in women's attitude toward their own position and toward men. Attitudes toward authority in the home, toward the organization of the family with respect to relatives and in-laws, toward morality and aesthetics, and attitudes toward myriad other things may vary. Such differences may make adjustment difficult.

The problem of deciding whether or not to marry a person of another nationality is not uncommon among students who are in a position to meet young men and women from other countries. If an American meets a foreign student who is taking part of his



college work in this country, knows the language, is partly assimilated through his school experience, and plans to live here permanently, the problem of adjustment in marriage may not be insurmountable. But the American who plans to marry a foreign student and reside permanently in the latter's homeland without first having experience in that country is contemplating an extremely difficult and in many cases impossible situation. Let us remember, however, that the potential problem is relative to the degree of difference between the two nationalities. One would scarcely consider mixed the marriage of a citizen of this country and an English-speaking Canadian.

It is exciting and romantic to fall in love with someone whose foreign extraction casts a halo and stimulates the imagination. If residence abroad is contemplated, the thrill of travel is added. In cases that have come to light in conferences with college students, the thrill, excitement, and glamour have tended to becloud sober judgment and to make the wedding the limit of foresight. Furthermore, there is usually no way of checking on the credentials of one whose roots and attachments are abroad. He may make exaggerated claims about himself or his family; the American must judge only by his word and his own attitude toward his own importance. In rare cases there is deliberate falsification. For illustration let us consider a specific case.

The girl was an American college student who "fell in love" with a Persian. They planned to marry when he graduated and to return to Persia to live. The thought of travel and residence in a foreign land seemed like a thrilling adventure to the girl and, as subsequent events proved, the glamour camouflaged her infatuation and made it seem like love. About Persia, about the man's family, about his way of life she knew nothing except what he had told her. There was no reason to doubt his honesty or sincerity, but even sincere persons can look at life only through their own eyes. He saw Persia and his people through the eyes of a Persian, not through the eyes of a young American girl thousands of miles away from relatives, friends, familiar scenes, and customary ways of life.

In the discussion of her contemplated marriage, it soon became apparent that there were several fundamental questions that she had never sought to answer. Would the day-by-day existence of a Persian wife be agreeable to her? What is the position of

women in that country? Would her relatives-in-law accept her? Would she like them? Could she learn the language quickly enough to prevent the beginning of an unbridgeable gap between herself and her husband's people? Would she become homesick? Would she be satisfied to see her children reared as Persians? Was the economic structure and her husband's place in it exactly as he had described them? Would the Persian standard of living be acceptable? Is there any prejudice in Persia toward Americans?

The answers to these and similar questions she did not know. To marry without knowing them would be a plunge into the dark unknown and would involve risk. The more she thought about it, the more she realized that there was little in favor of her plan and much against it. At length she decided to break her engagement, and she has not regretted doing so.

We do not mean to imply that a marriage such as this can never succeed. However, the problems are extremely difficult; only the unusual person is equipped to make a satisfactory adjustment and then only with an equally unusual spouse.

#### RACIAL DIFFERENCE

Racial difference may occur with or without difference in nationality. In either situation, such mixed marriage presents unusually difficult problems, which in some cases are hopelessly insoluble.

In this country there seems to be more intermixture of races than there is intermarriage among them. This is due partly to legal restrictions, since it is unlawful in some states for persons of different races to marry each other. Not only is the marriage void in such states, but in some there is a penalty imposed, besides. The greatest barrier to racial intermarriage lies in the mores, the established customs of the group, together with the attitudes and prejudices to which such customs give rise. There is no biological aversion to intermarriage, but the social aversion often goes beyond prejudice to repugnance. It is this aversion, this attitude of repugnance, that limits the number of intermarriages and makes extremely difficult or next to impossible those that do occur.

So far as this country is concerned, the least readily acceptable variety of racial intermarriage is that between white and Negro.

With public opinion and the mores what they are, the odds against such a marriage are insurmountable. We have said that any type of marriage can be made to succeed if the special problems concerned are solved. Interracial marriage is no exception, but its success hinges upon the word *if*—*if* the special problems are solved. Marriage does not occur in a vacuum; it occurs in a social milieu. Irresistible social pressure may be brought to bear upon it and upon the persons in it. In some societies, Negro-white marriage may be made to succeed; but in ours, where attitudes are highly seasoned by tradition and where prejudice runs rampant, it becomes scarcely short of impossible, especially among the higher economic and educational classes. Therefore, to discuss Negro-white marriage may seem superfluous, since so few cases occur and the more intelligent members of both races have no desire to increase the number. What is true of Negro-white marriage, however, is true to a lesser degree of all interracial marriage. There are instances of success, but such instances are in the minority. There are always very difficult problems, which try the best in the successful marriages and contribute abundantly to the failure of the others.

There is the important matter of finding mutual friends sufficiently unprejudiced to accept both spouses without distinction or discrimination. There is the problem of acceptance by the two sets of in-laws, and that of one spouse's feeling the prejudice directed toward the racial group of the other spouse. For example, in many quarters in this country there is prejudice against Chinese and Japanese. Such prejudice is expressed orally and in writing. Even though the couple had no difficulties with friends, there would still be the problem of the white person's adjusting to this pressure of public opinion. To fall into the trap of attributing to the racial difference marital problems that were the result of other factors would be easy.

There is also the problem of offspring. Life is seldom smooth for the hybrid child. His associates tend to relegate him to the position of that one of the two racial groups he represents which is held lower in social esteem. Often he is not fully accepted in either group, becoming quasi-outcast, torn by conflicting loyalties. A very small admixture of yellow, brown, or black "blood" can throw the balance to the side of the colored race, and usually no amount of white ancestry seems to counteract this imbalance.

Hence we find a hybrid child with white aspirations, not understanding why he is shackled by public opinion and social pressure to colored status. Even when the child is accepted in the white group and by white friends, there is still a tendency for them to consider him "different." Having associated with whites his amorous proclivities naturally are directed toward whites; but there he is likely to strike an obstacle, for whites hesitate to date him and refuse to marry him.

#### DIFFERENCE IN ECONOMIC STATUS

In storybooks the princess marries the page, the heiress marries the chauffeur, the millionaire marries the chorus girl, and they "live happily ever after." In real life, too, there are similar cases. But to marry a person of radically different economic status and make that marriage succeed is not so simple as it seems to the young person in love or to the individual whose materialistic approach to romance leads him to seek a wealthy spouse. Wealth involves responsibility as well as pleasure, restriction as well as privilege. Economic status, cultural background, tastes, habits of life are so interrelated that there is more involved than merely the use of money. Let us discuss briefly some of the possible problems that may be faced by spouses of different economic status.

Some sensible, practical financial arrangement must be worked out if the marriage is to be successful. It is probably somewhat easier if the man is the wealthier, because then the marital situation more nearly approximates the traditional one, where the husband is the provider. If the wife is wealthier, while there are various possible plans for the use of her money, they are not of equal merit and their acceptability and practicality vary according to the two personalities involved. The couple might create a common fund or the wife might let the husband control her money. She might buy luxuries, while he provided support. She might retain control of her money, using it only occasionally or saving it for the future. The couple might live on the husband's income only or on the wife's money.

If the husband is the poorer and accepts part of the wife's money or the benefits therefrom, there arises the problem of the effect of such a procedure upon his personality and upon the wife's attitude toward the husband and the marriage. Some men

are so deeply influenced by tradition that a plan of this kind would make them feel inferior and would prove irritating or seem depressing and humiliating. Others have personality quirks which, through such a plan, might produce the equivalent of pauperization. Still others have the intelligence and the personality by means of which such a plan could be made an unqualified success. If the wife became domineering or demanded gratitude from the husband, conflict might easily result.

If the husband is the poorer and refuses to accept any part of the wife's money, even though she is willing to have him do so, there may be erected a barrier between them. Furthermore, living on the husband's income may prove trying to the wife who has been accustomed to a high standard, and may give rise to feelings of guilt, regret, or inferiority on the part of the husband who forces her to do so.

If the wife is the poorer, she may have some difficulty in adjusting to the husband's way of life. Most girls from families of moderate income are not prepared to direct a household of servants or to manage a large household budget. There is also the ever-present temptation to spend too freely because of the sudden rise in standard of living—an indulgence that may not be readily accepted by a husband who is thrifty though wealthy.

In one case a very intelligent girl of the middle economic class married a wealthy man. The husband allowed the wife \$30,000 a year for household expenses alone. The girl was not equipped to operate a household on that sort of budget and at the end of the first year found herself in debt. Only expert budget assistance finally helped her to solve her problem. This same girl would have had no difficulty at all in operating a home if her husband had earned \$3,000 a year.

Another problem likely to be met is that of the congeniality of the spouses' families and the degree to which each family accepts the child-in-law or makes demands beyond the ability of the child.

Whatever the case may be, success in this sort of mixed marriage is not so easily achieved as might at first glance be supposed. As indicated above, some sensible practical scheme for the use of money must be worked out, and this should be done before the wedding. Just because one of the parties is wealthy, the future should not be left to chance or hope.

## DIFFERENCE AS TO FAMILY BACKGROUND

As everyone knows, there are superior individuals who have sprung from seemingly poor family backgrounds and inferior persons who have derived from apparently very good ones. The basic question in this connection is not only the nature of the family background of the person with whom marriage is contemplated but also how much it has affected him. In most cases environment leaves its mark, and an individual's family experience is carried into his marriage. Difference in background implies dissimilarity in tastes, attitudes, social behavior, and a host of other things, any of which may conceivably affect a marital relationship.

Another pertinent reason for taking background into consideration is that, whether we wish it or not, the wedding delivers to each spouse free of charge a complete set of in-laws. These in-laws will visit and be visited, will make demands of one sort or another, and in many cases will try to hold the child to their own pattern of life, even though he has deviated from it. Much depends upon proximity of residence; but geography does not always eradicate family bonds or extricate a child from the cultural pattern that has been woven around him.

## EDUCATIONAL DIFFERENCE

The question of whether or not to marry anyone of considerably different educational experience is not uncommon, in the public at large, or among college students who are away from the home town, where the fiancé, who is not planning to attend college, has remained after graduation from high school. The answer is not simple, because there is a fine distinction to be made between real and formal education. Usually these two types overlap; but they are not necessarily identical. There are many self-educated persons who have never attended college; and there are many poorly educated men and women who have been awarded degrees.

A distinction must also be made between technical, specialized, vocational, or professional training and education for living. A girl with a bachelor of arts degree has three or four years less formal schooling than a man with a medical, engineering, or law degree; but so far as education for living is concerned, they have an approximately equal amount. Two high school graduates

may have about the same amount of education for living, even though one of them goes on after graduation and takes several years of specialized business training.

When there is great disparity of education between husband and wife, there are in general four possible courses that their marital life may take. (1) They may make a satisfactory adjustment, with little actual change on either side. (2) There may be formed between them the unbridgeable chasm mentioned above. (3) The one with the better education may assist the other to raise himself to the higher level. (4) The one with the lesser education may drag the other down to the lower level. The last is the path of least resistance and is not infrequent in actual experience.

In his intensive study of 200 married persons, Hamilton found<sup>1</sup> that for persons in whose marriages both spouses had an equal amount of formal education there were more cases of high happiness score than of low happiness score, while for persons in whose marriages one spouse had more formal education than the other the opposite was true. When the husband had more education than the wife, there were more men and more women with low scores than with high ones. When the wife had more education than the husband, there were more men with high scores than with low ones. but more women with low ones than with high ones.

#### DIFFERENCE IN INTELLIGENCE

Difference in intelligence and difference in education are not necessarily concomitant. There are individuals who, by good fortune, devious means, or misplaced charity, zigzag through the maze of hurdles that better students jump, escaping academic elimination and receiving degrees that are insignia of neither ability nor achievement.

In uncommon cases couples of noticeably different intelligence get along well in marriage because, as we have said, success is in part relative to expectations. A genius and a dullard may make a mutually satisfactory adjustment if the former is not unhappy in intellectual isolation, enjoys a pleasant home, and has his emotional needs satisfied, and if the latter finds it agreeable to serve the superior mate and bask in reflected brilliance with hero-

<sup>1</sup> HAMILTON, G. V., "A Research in Marriage," p. 513, Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. New York 1929

worshipping admiration. Still, such marriages of genius and dullard are not common enough to furnish the basis for any well-founded generalization.

In more ordinary unions in which there exists a difference in intelligence between the spouses, there is danger that the two may grow apart. Intellectual isolation may prove irksome and unsatisfying to the superior individual. They may both discover that in marriage mental stimulation is as important as emotional satisfaction, that exchange of ideas and contact of minds is as essential as exchange of caresses and contact of bodies. Intellectual isolation may result on the one hand in withdrawal, so that the superior spouse becomes less and less a part of the total marital situation, or on the other hand in his seeking elsewhere for the stimulation and intellectual contacts that the other spouse cannot supply. Either condition tends to produce a loneliness that makes marriage disappointing.

The less intelligent spouse, if he is keen enough to sense the real situation, may develop a feeling of inferiority. If he is not so keen, he may aggravate the difficulty by his very apathy and blindness. If the former occurs and he does grow to feel inferior, that too may produce an unconquerable loneliness that will eventuate in withdrawal or the seeking of companionship upon a more acceptable level. A feeling of inferiority may produce unhappiness, insecurity, pain, and frustration. The inferior spouse aspires to keep pace with his mate but comes to realize that his mental legs are not long enough to maintain the stride.

Adjustment is not impossible, however. Hornell and Ella Hart suggest<sup>1</sup> that it can be done (1) if the couple both recognize and face the facts, (2) if they find common ground in certain areas of their lives where they are on a more nearly equal footing, (3) if one partner is allowed to excel in some respects and the other partner in other respects, (4) if they adopt a definite leader-follower relationship, or (5) if the less intelligent spouse accepts a role of subordination.

#### DIFFERENCE AS TO PREVIOUS MARITAL STATUS

Marrying a widowed or a divorced person is not the same as marrying one who has always been single, no matter how similar the external conditions may seem to be. When such a union is

<sup>1</sup> HART, HORNELL, and ELLA B. HART, "Personality and the Family," p. 114, D. C. Heath & Company, Boston, 1935.



contemplated, answers to a number of important questions should be ascertained to the satisfaction of the person to whom marriage will be a new experience. If the other individual's previous marriage was happy, that fact is likely to affect his attitude toward his new relationship. If it was unhappy, that experience will have left a mark. There is also the fact that marriage gave him a social status that cannot readily be eradicated from the memories of those who know him, especially if they also knew his spouse. It is inconceivable that anyone with normal human sensitivities could be completely indifferent to a marital experience.

Whether the previously married person was widowed or divorced, there is the question of rebound. Is he marrying in an attempt to fill an unfillable void in his emotional life and doing so before he has become sufficiently readjusted to make a wise choice and use sound judgment? Is he marrying in desperation? How much time has elapsed since his divorce or bereavement?

What is his attitude toward his first spouse? Is there any possibility of that person's coming between you, either actually or in the imagination of one or both of you? In particular, why is he contemplating marriage with you? Is it because you are you and he loves you for yourself, or because you are so much like the previous spouse with whom he was happy, or because you are opposite in type and personal qualities from the person with whom he was unhappy? In other words, does he love you or his first spouse in you? Does he continually compare you with the other person? How do you react to this comparison? Could you tolerate it over a long period in the close contacts of wedded life? Does he continue to display reminders of his past experience; if so, might they become slight barriers between you or make you somewhat self-conscious in your new relationship?

Will you, when you marry this person, step into a home already furnished and established by the previous spouse? Or will the two of you begin an entirely new home together? Could you make an adjustment if the former were the case?

After the wedding, where will you stand in the estimation of his friends and relatives, especially those of the former who were friends of both husband and wife? This problem becomes more than usually complicated if the friends and relatives feel that he remarried too soon.

What is his knowledge of and attitude toward sex as compared with yours? Some individuals are so abysmally ignorant of sex, even after marriage, that their marital experience makes no appreciable difference in their attitudes. In other cases marital experience, especially when coupled with some ignorance and lack of consideration, leads a person to make demands that the uninitiated, inexperienced spouse cannot meet. In still others, it produces deeper understanding, fuller appreciation, and greater consideration. At best there cannot be the same element of new adventure together when to one spouse sexual experience in marriage is a repetition of something familiar.

There are further special questions applying to marriage with a divorced person. One of the most important considerations is the real cause for the divorce. Almost all cases of divorce are two-sided; neither partner is solely to blame. Nevertheless, sometimes one, sometimes the other is more at fault. In any case, the real situation out of which the divorce grew is important. Unless he understood that situation, one could scarcely marry a divorced person without grave risk. Yet such marriage in darkness is sometimes contemplated. A college girl, some eight months before coming for counsel, had met a man six years her senior. At the time of their meeting he was married, but she was not aware of this fact and he did not enlighten her until after he got a divorce, some four months later. In the entire period of their acquaintance she had been with him a total of about six weeks. The remainder of the courtship had taken place by correspondence. The girl knew nothing whatever about his first marriage, his former wife, or the reasons for the divorce. She did know that he had some personality traits, such as a quick temper and a tendency to be dogmatic, which were not too pleasant; but she had never attempted to relate these to his marital adjustment. She had not even considered the possibility of his marrying on the rebound, and was giving his proposal of marriage serious consideration. In the total situation there were many elements that would have made marriage precarious; not the least of these was the girl's ignorance of the man's earlier experience and the reasons for his marital failure.

Knowledge of the grounds for divorce alleged in court is, as we shall see in a later chapter, not sufficient, because causes and grounds are seldom identical. The grounds are worked out to

satisfy the requirements of the law and may have little relation to the couple's actual relationship. Furthermore, there is a tendency for more divorces to be sought by and granted to wives. To ascertain who sued for divorce would not render the information desirable in contemplating marriage to one of the divorced partners.

Whether or not the other person was more at fault than his first spouse, there is the possibility of a problem's developing. If he was more at fault, he may repeat his mistakes. He may also still be in love with the former spouse. If he was less at fault, he may be bitter and disillusioned. He may even marry for revenge. In either case, he may regret the divorce. It is important to know whether he has become soured and pessimistic about marriage or is still optimistic and looking for the best that marriage has to offer.

It is essential to know, too, whether he has readjusted himself after the divorce crisis. Was he at odds with his former spouse, with marriage, or with life in general? If the first is true, then marriage to another person may prove successful. If the second is the case, previous maladjustments may again develop or a new start may make for better adjustment because the first marriage and its termination, though painful, were instructive. If the individual was and is at odds with life, of which marriage is only one maladjusted part, a second marriage will in all probability eventuate in some such way as the first, unless those personality traits or circumstances that set him at odds with life are readjusted. This is not a simple, quick process.

Another pertinent question is the number of former marriages and divorces. One may be more hopeful of a person who has been divorced but once. When the process is repeated over and over again, that is fair evidence that the individual is seeking something that quirks in his personality or that the nature of married life will not permit him to achieve. Marriage to such a person would probably be a temporary affair.

For obvious reasons, in marriage to a divorced person the possibility of the former spouse's becoming a disrupting factor is greater than in widowhood. There is not only an emotional bond but the very real possibility of appearance or communication. The former spouse may be met at social gatherings. News is spread through common friends. The person may have

trouble and ask for assistance, as in one case in which the husband did not hear from his former wife until several years after his second marriage, when she had some difficulty and wrote for financial assistance. There may even be an attempt to rewin the divorced spouse who has remarried. Whether or not a marriage can withstand the pressure of such circumstances depends upon the personalities of the two spouses. Some persons maintain their balance; others cannot do so.

If a divorced man pays alimony to his former wife, this fact may serve either to maintain the tie with the earlier marriage or to keep alive the old bitterness and disappointment. In either case, the economic problem of living on a reduced income may be irksome, especially since it is so easy to project the blame for it onto the recipient of the alimony.

If the divorced individual had children by his first spouse, they may serve as a tie to the past, even though they live with the other person. A marriage may be so unhappy that divorce is release and the two persons are both gladly rid of each other. But one can scarcely be divorced from his children. Seldom do they contribute to the cause of marital failure. Parental attachment is usually too strong to be severed by court decree. If there are children through the new marriage too, the whole situation becomes complicated, as the relationships between the two sets of offspring become tangled, equivocal, and sometimes hypersensitive.

In cases of marriage to a widowed or a divorced person whose children live with him there is the problem of determining whether one has been chosen chiefly to become a husband or a wife or mainly to become a stepparent. In either case, there is stepparenthood with its ensuing adjustments. Under the best circumstances this is not easy. In general, the older the children are the more difficult the adjustment becomes. If they are very young, little difficulty is encountered unless the stepparent resents them. If they are old enough to have known both their natural parents, there is not only the problem of the mutual adjustment of new parent and children and the latter's acceptance of the former, but also the problem of the children's adjustment to the new relationship between their natural parent and the stepparent. In many cases, the children are on the defensive. The new parent is an outsider intruding into a hitherto closed family

group, and acceptance is difficult. If there are children by the second marriage also, there is the problem of maneuvering the adjustment of the two sets of offspring and at the same time preventing favoritism and discrimination.

The stepmother, like the mother-in-law, has been subjected to a great deal of suspicion and caricaturing. Some of it has been deserved. Much of it has not. There are stepmothers who show favoritism, who resent the children of some other woman, who use them as focal points for all the pettiness and cruelty of which their personalities are capable. But there are also others who courageously and with self-abnegation assume the arduous task of rearing the children of the men they love and do as well by them as their personal and economic resources would permit their doing with their own offspring. Some women eagerly desire stepchildren. In one case a plan was evolved by which a prospective stepmother made frequent visits to the home of the child's grandparents for the express purpose of winning the child's confidence and affection and of gradually and subtly weaning it away from the unofficial guardians who had kept it for so long that they were reluctant to give it up.

In attempting to overcome the one-sided stepmother tradition and also the possible prejudice of the children toward her, the woman may overstress her care and attention. If she disciplines the children, she may feel that she will be blamed for doing it because they are not her own. This may make her feel awkward and self-conscious toward them, even jealous of them. The woman may feel that she gives the impression of loving the children too little, and this may lead her to indulge them too much.<sup>1</sup>

### RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE

Religion is more important in marriage than many young persons in love are inclined to think. It may be a uniting force or a disrupting influence. It may be the prop that supports a couple during a crisis, or it may precipitate a crisis. It may make for peace and happiness or for dissension and ill will. It may serve as a means of dissipating potential conflict or as a focal point upon which incipient conflict may crystallize. It may be a

<sup>1</sup> KNOFF, OLGA, "The Art of Being a Woman," pp. 213-214, Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., New York, 1932.

common interest orienting husband and wife in the same direction, or it may produce a divergence of interests drawing husband and wife toward opposite poles.

The young sometimes fail to realize the importance of religion in marriage because their relatively short-time perspective does not permit a final judgment. As Howson<sup>1</sup> points out, college students often abandon religion and the church temporarily, only to return to them later in life when the sober responsibilities of marriage and parenthood awaken them to a new sense of religious values. When this occurs, early training usually reasserts itself. The apple seldom falls far from the tree. If the religious backgrounds of husband and wife are basically different, that difference may again come to the fore, even though in earlier years it was somewhat overshadowed by youthful romance.

When marriage to anyone of different religious background and affiliation is being contemplated, there are several questions that ought first to be answered satisfactorily. How much does religion mean to you? Is it something of little importance, in which your interest is superficial, or is it something so vitally important that you could not conceive of living without it? Do you believe that your particular faith is the only right one or are you tolerant and broadminded? Do you have a driving zeal to convert others to your belief or are you willing to let each adhere to the belief of his choice?

How great is the religious difference between you and the other person? Is it a Catholic-Protestant difference, Jewish-gentile, Christian-non-Christian (such as Buddhist or Mohammedan), fundamentalist-liberal, religious-nonreligious, denominational, such as Baptist-Methodist, or a matter of degree, one of you being more religious than the other but both adhering in general to the same faith? How tolerant and broad-minded is the other person? There are Protestants and Protestants, Catholics and Catholics, just as there are individuals of varying degree and type in every religious group. Furthermore, in each group there are good ones and bad ones, intelligent ones and stupid ones, well-informed and ignorant, tolerant and intolerant, well-adjusted and maladjusted. The common tendency is to lump together persons of a given religious affiliation and assume that they

<sup>1</sup> FOLSOM, JOSEPH (ed.), "Plan for Marriage," p. 222, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1938.

are all alike. Protestants often discuss Catholics as if the latter were all fashioned from the same pattern and were as identical as the proverbial peas in a pod. The same is done with other groups. There is great variation within groups, as well as among them. A very liberal Christian, for example, may be more similar to a very liberal Jew than he is to an ultraconservative member of his own group. In the contemplation of marriage, individual differences as well as group differences must be taken into account.

Would either or both of you make religion a bone of contention? How did you deduce your answer to this question? Have you ever discussed religion together? Do you argue about it and find yourselves emotionally wrought up and unable to find any common basis for agreement? Would he expect you to change your religion or did you offer to do so? Would you expect him to change his or did he suggest it? Has either of these alternatives been discussed? If so, when you discussed them, did you mean change in religion or in church affiliation? It is easy to talk glibly about the latter when romance casts a rosy hue upon problems. But is the former really, at least readily, possible? Have you planned that each will retain his own faith and affiliation? If so, have you carefully thought through the problems that this might involve in later life, when there are children to be reared?

Children can scarcely adhere to two divergent faiths; some choice must be made. To plan to let the child make his own choice when he reaches the age of discretion is more easily said than done. Either he must be subjected to some religious influence in early life and thus have his choice colored, or he must be allowed to grow to the age of discretion without having any religious influence exerted upon him, and thus be expected to make a choice with no foundation upon which to make it. Frequently the husband and wife who are intelligently tolerant of each other's religion find themselves unable to agree upon the training of offspring. The child may be pulled simultaneously in two directions; if, then, he goes the way of one parent, the other may feel resentful. The problem can be worked out, but a satisfactory solution requires all the personal resources that the two parents possess.

This is a discussion of marriage, not of theology. We are interested in the role of religion in marital adjustment, especially

in the part that religious difference may play and in the problems that such difference may create or accentuate. If we seem to paint a somewhat pessimistic picture of religiously mixed marriage, our discussion is not to be interpreted as a criticism of any religious group. It is directed toward the relative practicality of mixed marriages. In this discussion all religions and all faiths are considered of equal merit and are on an equal footing. "Many are the paths which lead in shadow up the side of the mountain; but from the cloudless summit all who climb behold the selfsame moon." So says an old proverb, and such will be our attitude toward religions in the discussion that follows.

**Catholic-Protestant Marriage.** Protestant and Roman Catholic church organizations have evolved such dissimilar tenets and countenance such different modes of behavior that marriage adjustment between their adherents has become difficult to work out. Neither the Catholic nor the Protestant church encourages mixed marriage. The latter is the more tolerant of it. The former definitely discourages it and permits it only after certain conditions have been fulfilled. According to one Catholic writer, who presumably reflects official opinion, the Catholic church opposes mixed marriage not because it holds non-Catholics in low esteem but because it is solicitous of their welfare, as well as that of its own adherents. The church has found through centuries of experience that mixed marriage contains elements dangerous to the happiness of both parties.<sup>1</sup>

Another Catholic writer goes so far as to say that in some cases even keeping company with a non-Catholic is a sin. It is not always sinful, because under some circumstances the church does permit mixed marriage. If, however, the Catholic is already rather "weak in the Faith" and keeps company with a non-Catholic who "makes no secret of harboring gross prejudices and hostile sentiments against our Faith, and expresses them openly and sneeringly" and they plan marriage, the Catholic party often commits a grievous sin. In any case, this same writer believes, when a Catholic keeps company with a non-Catholic, there is always the possibility of its eventuating in marriage and this is dangerous to the faith and to the happiness of the Catholic party. Hence, the latter should be very careful

<sup>1</sup> O'BRIEN, JOHN A., "Why Not a Mixed Marriage—A Plain Answer to a Common Question," pp. 2-3, pamphlet, Paulist Press, New York, 1937.



to tell the confessor of the "hazardous courtship," in order to obtain advice and perhaps to avert disaster.<sup>1</sup>

Howson<sup>2</sup> feels that "under the circumstances, a union between a devout and faithful Roman Catholic and a convinced member of any other religious group lacks that equality of spiritual status that is essential to the highest reaches of marital adjustment."

The Protestant church will accept as valid marriage in a Catholic church by a Catholic clergyman; but the Catholic church recognizes as valid only the ceremony performed by a priest. Marriage by a Protestant clergyman is not recognized by the Catholic church. Of course, the ruling of the Catholic church is not imposed upon Protestants and the Pope does not presume to legislate concerning the validity of Protestant weddings performed by Protestant clergymen.<sup>3</sup>

The Catholic church takes this stand with regard to the validity of marriages of its adherents because it considers itself the only true church. To recognize as valid a ceremony performed by a Protestant clergyman would be putting churches founded by mere men—Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and others—on the same level as the church founded by Jesus Christ, namely, the Catholic church. Such an act would be a commission of the sin of apostasy. Catholics who deliberately violate this ruling are subject to excommunication because they are guilty not only of disobedience to the church but also of treason to the faith of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

In order to show disapproval of mixed marriages, the Catholic church forbids the performance of the ceremony in the church proper. It must take place in the priest's home or in the sacristy or vestry. Furthermore, for such a marriage the banns are not published as they are when both parties are Catholics. The blessing of the ring is omitted. There is no nuptial Mass.<sup>5</sup>

In some cases, because of these details as to ceremony, parents refuse to attend, and there is family friction and feeling even

<sup>1</sup> MEYER, REV. FULGENCE, "I'm Keeping Company Now," pp. 6-7, pamphlet, Paulist Press, New York, 1934. Reprinted with permission.

<sup>2</sup> FOLSOM, *op. cit.*, p. 223. Reprinted with the permission of Harper & Brothers.

<sup>3</sup> CONWAY, REV. BERTRAND L., "The Question Box," rev. ed., pp. 337-338, Paulist Press, New York, 1929.

<sup>4</sup> O'BRIEN, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>5</sup> CONWAY, *op. cit.*, pp. 335-336.

before the wedding. It is unlikely that the Catholic would break faith and be married in a Protestant church. It is more probable that the ceremony would take place in the priest's home or the sacristy, as explained above. Parents who are ardent opponents of Catholicism may not yield even for so important an occasion as a child's wedding. A Catholic who has a wedding ceremony performed by a civil officiant, such as a justice of the peace, commits a sin. He does not contract a valid religious marriage but is not subject to excommunication, since he has not committed the sin of apostasy or breaking away from the faith.<sup>1</sup>

One very weighty problem in Catholic-Protestant marriage is that of birth control. Officially the Catholic church is in unalterable and irrevocable opposition to what it terms "unnatural" methods of family limitation. "Natural" means, such as abstinence and the so-called "safe period," it will countenance. "Unnatural" means, such as mechanical and chemical contraceptives, it seriously frowns upon and considers sinful.

In a marriage in which both partners are Protestant they are free to do as they see fit with regard to spacing children or limiting their number. In a marriage in which both spouses are Catholic they have a similar point of view and are subject to the same restrictions and twinges of conscience. But when one is Protestant and the other Catholic, there is ample ground for conflict over this vital question of procreation. Often the problem does not arise until the couple have had one or two children, and this fact makes it difficult for the unmarried to predict accurately what their attitudes will be later.

The solution of the problem is sometimes simpler if it is the wife who is Catholic. She then is the one who opposes birth control and she is also the one who must bear the babies. There are husbands as well as wives who wish to limit the size of their families, so even in such cases there may be cause for conflict. If, however, the husband is a Catholic and the wife is a Protestant, if she wants no more children but his religious scruples will not permit the practice of contraception and his natural impulses make it difficult for him to remain continent, there may be a crisis. Take a case such as the following. The couple have had four children. Since the birth of the last child the wife has been

<sup>1</sup> O'BRIEN, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

in poor health. She cannot safely bear another child, she does not want another, and they cannot well afford to have one. She is Protestant and would use some sort of contraceptive if her husband would permit it. He is Catholic, is virile, and is somewhat inconsiderate. He opposes contraception and refuses to remain continent. The result is that the couple are growing apart. Estrangement from her husband is the only form of self-defense the wife has thus far been able to devise. The Catholic might permit his wife to use contraceptives, even though he himself did not sanction them. This is, however, not strictly in accordance with Catholic doctrine and may lead to some conflict and a feeling of guilt.

If the couple are willing to accept all the children that the nonuse of contraceptives might provide, or if they can work out some satisfactory solution not inconsistent with Catholic ideals or not painful to their own consciences, the matter of birth control need not be an obstacle to successful marital adjustment.

Both parties are expected to agree that any children of their particular union will be reared as Catholics. Usually this agreement is in writing. A sample form reads in part as follows.

I, the undersigned \_\_\_\_\_ not a member of the Roman Catholic Church, wishing to contract marriage with \_\_\_\_\_ a member of the Roman Catholic Church, purpose to do so with the understanding that the marriage bond thus contracted is indissoluble, except by death; and I furthermore contract with said \_\_\_\_\_ that . . . he shall be permitted the free exercise of religion according to the Roman Catholic faith, and that all children, of either sex, born of this marriage, shall be baptized and educated in the faith and according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, even if \_\_\_\_\_ should happen to be taken away by death. I furthermore promise that no other marriage ceremony than that to be performed by the Catholic priest shall take place.<sup>1</sup>

This form is signed by the priest, the bride and groom, and two witnesses. It is made out in duplicate, one copy being sent to the Chancery, the other being filed with the parish records.

The obligation to fulfill the terms of this agreement is a moral rather than a legal one; and if it were violated there would be no

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted with the permission of Rev. Robert J. White, Dean of the School of Law, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C.

suit for breach of contract. Nevertheless, no non-Catholic should sign such a statement insincerely. To do so would not only involve a serious violation of his personal integrity but would put his relationship to his spouse upon an equivocal and precarious footing. The marriage would be begun with dishonesty and there would almost certainly be conflict as the Catholic spouse attempted to carry out his own agreement.

One of the chief reasons for which the Catholic church prohibits mixed marriage is the danger that the children will be lost to the faith and to the church. The influence of the non-Catholic parent may prove a hindrance to the child's acceptance of Catholic doctrine and his devotion to Catholic ideals unless this influence is counteracted by the Catholic parent, the church, and the parochial school. The Catholic parent may die, leaving the other to rear the children as non-Catholics.<sup>1</sup>

Even though the agreement be kept and the children be reared as Catholics, the problem of mixed marriage is not automatically and finally solved. It is one thing to agree to a plan for the training of one's future children, which are not yet born; it is another thing to carry out such a plan without reluctance or regret. Protestants usually do not want their children to be Catholics any more than Catholics want theirs to be Protestants. Suppose, however, that the children are reared as Catholics without either reluctance or regret on the part of the Protestant parent. There still remains the problem of the children's reconciling themselves to having a non-Catholic parent, who does not participate in their church activities—at least, not on an equal footing with themselves—and who by the very faith they profess is a spiritual outsider and a foreigner to the spiritual fold.

The Catholic church does not recognize divorce for any cause. Under unusual circumstances and by special dispensation, a marriage may be annulled and for adequate reason a couple may be allowed to separate. Such separation does not dissolve the marriage tie; neither party may remarry, because they are still married to each other. Catholics may secure a legal divorce and, as far as the law is concerned, may remarry without committing bigamy. But such a divorce is not recognized by the church. If a Protestant spouse secures a divorce from a Catholic,

<sup>1</sup> CONWAY, *op. cit.*, pp. 335-336.

that divorce is legally acceptable but the church will not permit the Catholic to remarry. Furthermore, a Catholic may not marry a divorced person.

Most people enter marriage with the idea of permanence. Relatively few think of possible divorce and still fewer marry feeling that the bond will probably be impermanent or temporary. In a survey of the opinions of 1,151 college students, approximately 91 per cent said that when they married they would consider it to be for life. Only 7 per cent said that they would feel free, if the marriage did not succeed, to get a divorce. These opinions do not show what the students would actually do if their marriages failed; they show only the present attitude of those who made the statements. Why is the Catholic attitude toward divorce something to be taken into consideration in contemplating a mixed marriage when persons about to be married do not think of divorce anyway? It is important because it is a reflection of the whole Catholic point of view concerning the nature of marriage and its relationship to the spiritual existence of the couple.

The problem of Catholic-Protestant marriage is one thing if a couple are already married and adjustment is the only alternative, and quite another thing if they are in love but as yet unmarried and must either agree upon their plans for the future or discontinue their relationship. The latter may mean permanent regret. For those persons who are neither married to, nor in love with, nor even going with individuals of the other faith the question has still another aspect. If one is not in love with a Catholic, or with a Protestant, as the case may be, he may avoid the complications of mixed marriage by allowing an acquaintance to go no further as soon as he discovers the other person's religious affiliation. He may nip the relationship in the bud before he falls in love and a break becomes impossible or painful. This is exactly what one girl learned through a bitter experience. She was a Protestant and had been engaged to a Catholic. They could not come to an agreement as to their beliefs or their marriage. The engagement was broken. After she recovered from the disappointment, the girl began to date again. She was careful, however, not to date Catholic boys. The moment she learned that a particular boy was Catholic he ceased to be eligible. She did this not because she was prejudiced or embittered.

tered but because she was practical and knew from experience how easily emotions may betray one.

If Catholic-Protestant marriage is seriously contemplated, there are two things to be done, preferably before a definite engagement is agreed upon. These are the *sine qua non* of common sense and successful adjustment. (1) As much as possible should be learned about the other person's religion. This may be done through reading, church attendance, and conference with both the minister and the priest. (2) The couple should evolve and agree upon a practical, workable plan, which should be much more than an easily entered and equally easily broken compromise. This plan should be discussed with both clergymen and, if possible, with both sets of parents. Anything short of these two minimum essentials is marital suicide. We are assuming, of course, that both parties are the type who will keep promises and adhere to agreements once made.

In cases in which students have fallen in love, or what they momentarily diagnose as love, and are more or less definitely thinking in terms of Catholic-Protestant marriage, there is a tendency to talk glibly but understand slightly, to make broad statements of intention or ability that pass beyond the limits of practicality and probability. Such students agree so readily to become Catholic or to believe that the other person can do so that it is obvious that the difficulty, if not the impossibility of this process, has entirely escaped them. They are inclined to discount or overlook the influence of bias, to forget parents and their role after the wedding, to minimize the problem of child rearing or even to have a sort of temporary amnesia with regard to the fact that reproduction is still a part of human life. In examining briefly a few specific cases, we shall see why the only reasonable position the counselor could assume was pessimistic.

In one case the girl was Protestant, and her "boy friend" had intimated that he would expect her to become a Catholic if they married. She could not conceive of doing this, and it was apparent that she knew very little about the Catholic religion. The boy was trying to hurry her decision. Her parents were prejudiced against Catholics, although they liked the boy personally. Her father had threatened to disown her if she married a Catholic and had refused to attend the wedding.

In the second case a sensible, intelligent girl was trying to think through marriage to a Catholic boy with whom she was much in love and whom she held in high esteem, as he seemed to her to be the personification of her ideal. They had frequently discussed religion but always unsatisfactorily. He insisted that she become a Catholic if they married and that all their children be reared in that faith. She had done some reading and considerable thinking about the Catholic point of view and there were many things that she felt she could not accept. Her personal integrity was too great to permit her to change only her church affiliation and to turn Catholic only externally. She was afraid that if they married and she retained her own faith (provided that she could persuade the boy to allow her to do so), her children, being reared as Catholics, might not respect her. She had asked the boy about birth control, but he refused to discuss it and said she would have to trust him. He had also taken a now-or-never attitude with regard to her deciding to marry him and had given her a month in which to make up her mind.

In the third case the girl was a Catholic. In her opinion the boy had no idea as to what Catholicism means or involves. He had attended church with her upon occasion and had told her that he would become a Catholic. She was intelligent enough to realize that this was just empty talk on his part, for he continually scorned and disparaged her religion.

In each of these instances the girl was sure of her love for the boy and was confident that their marriage would be successful. There are only three cases among many, but they represent the typical situation insofar as this writer's observation permits a conclusion. In his experience in student counseling and in dealing with hundreds of students yearly in group discussions of this topic, there has been only one student case about which he could sincerely feel optimistic and which he could unequivocally sanction, as far as the religious mixture was concerned.

In that instance the Protestant girl was an unusually intelligent, well-balanced honor student. She was a leader in campus nondenominational religious activities, was very broad-minded, and had a type of religious experience and attitude that transcended outward form. She understood the attitude of the Catholic church toward mixed marriage, so agreed to make the

adjustment required of a Protestant. She read about Catholicism, attended the Catholic church occasionally, and had a number of conferences with the local priest, with whom a sincere friendship developed. In the Catholic religion she found many things that appealed to her, although she was not yet ready to accept it entirely and become a Catholic. She would not object to having her children reared in their father's faith. The boy was intelligent about the whole matter and made no arbitrary demands. Instead of hurrying her, he urged her to take her time in reaching a decision and did all that he could to help her to understand his church and belief. He was willing to marry her whether she remained a Protestant or became a Catholic. Both sets of parents were agreeable to the marriage. Her parents liked the boy and had no prejudice against his religion. In a case such as this there is still a problem; but it appears that a workable solution is imminent.

**Jewish-Gentile Marriage.** Among the problems to be confronted in Jewish-Gentile marriage are many of those already met in the Catholic-Protestant type, and we shall not elaborate upon these again. The reader may readily make his own inferences. There is, however, no well-organized, centrally controlled, world-wide church hierarchy to bring pressure to bear upon the individual Jew and to mold his thinking, as there is in the case of a Catholic. This leaves the Jew freer and also permits a wider range of variation among Jews than among Catholics. Officially, the latter tend to be more nearly uniform, and those who do deviate from the commonly accepted tenets of the church do so without the church's sanction. With Jews there is a great variety of points of view, each represented in one or more organizations, ranging from the strictly orthodox, who adhere closely to the ancient Hebrew belief and custom, through the conservative, to the most liberal or "reformed" Jews, who dispense with ancient ritual and freely reinterpret the Scriptures.

Perhaps no group of people is more carelessly lumped together than are Jews, in the thinking of the average American. To him a Jew is a Jew, whether he be a junk dealer from the slums of New York or a cultured, civic-spirited, public figure who is making an outstanding contribution to civilization. In this attitude of careless indiscrimination our average American is all too prone



to let his prejudice against the over-aggressive, money-grabbing, highly gesticulative type of Jew color his feeling toward the whole people, whereas he does not fall into the the same trap and as thoughtlessly generalize where equally undesirable and unpalatable Gentiles are concerned.

In these troublous, war-torn times, Jews are again being persecuted in various parts of the world. Many have fled to American shores as refugees. Fragments of their arbitrarily imposed inferiority have clung to them like germs, to spread the infection of fear, suspicion, and apprehension among the fanatical 101-per cent "patriots" of this country, whose ethnocentric shortsightedness makes them suspicious of everyone different from their own provincial selves. American-born Jews, too, are touched by a share of this newly fanned flame of prejudice.

Unfortunate as these two supposedly American tendencies—indiscrimination and prejudice—may be, they do form important elements in the background against which Jewish-Gentile marriage takes place. Try as he may to prevent it and sincere as he may be, the Gentile does in some cases find himself subjected to anti-Semitic prejudice because of his Jewish spouse, and in other cases is put on the defensive, developing a type of inferiority feeling. It is easy, too, for the Gentile to attribute to the other's Jewish extraction sources of marital conflict resulting from quite un-Jewish causes. If, in a moment of emotional uncontrol, as in a quarrel, the Gentile, reflecting the very worst sort of public opinion, uses the term *Jew* as if it were an epithet, there may be inflicted a wound hard to heal or there may be created a breach difficult to close.

Many Jews exhibit anatomical as well as religious characteristics that distinguish them from non-Jews. These characteristics serve to mark them and to call attention to a mixed marriage. In a case such as the following, this anatomical consideration is apparent, although the characteristics were not present. A Gentile girl was attracted to a Jewish boy. He was a brilliant student and had an agreeable personality. To both young people it appeared that their acquaintance was growing into love and neither of them was averse to marriage. One day, in an unguarded moment, the girl said something to this effect, "My, but I'm glad you don't look like a Jew." The boy was

surprised and taken aback. He asked whether it would make any difference in their future relationship and her attitude toward him if he did "look like a Jew." She said it would. At the time she was not aware of the hurt she caused; but their courtship had lost something and they finally stopped going together. The boy realized perhaps better than she what her attitude might do to their marriage.

In Jewish-Gentile marriage there is often some difficulty in making and in keeping common friends. In some more orthodox Jewish families a Gentile child-in-law would not be readily accepted. There is, also, the often disheartening problem of rearing children who, because of their mixed ancestry, are subjected to the same prejudice as Jews.

**Other Types.** A couple need not represent such radically divergent points of view as those discussed above in order to have marital conflict over religion. People seldom have friction and disagreement over true religion, but they are continually at odds over all sorts of dogmas. Suppose, for example, one spouse believed that Jesus was the product of natural reproductive processes and had a natural biological father, while the other spouse believed that His birth was unique in that He was the child of a virgin whose pregnancy resulted from immaculate conception. To many persons this is a fundamental theological contention, and it could be the source of endless argument and perennial friction. The theory of evolution has proved its power to generate dissension and ill will. Women's smoking may by devious route be brought under the religio-moral banner and become a thorn in doctrinal flesh. Even the quantity of water necessary to initiate a convert into the company of the elect may be permitted to separate believers who ought to be united in common purpose. One engaged college student asked for a conference to discuss what she considered a mixed marriage-to-be. She was Episcopalian; her fiancé was Methodist. He attended her church occasionally and liked it. She could not conceive of attending the Methodist church, because she was very deeply devoted to her own. By her own confession this was one of the things upon which she was most adamant. She wondered whether they could manage this problem after they married. They could. Whether they will or not depends entirely upon their attitudes and their behavior.

They could easily ground their marriage in the shallows of this denominational difference.

As was said at the beginning of this chapter, theoretically any *type* of marriage can be made to succeed if the special problems involved are faced and solved. We have attained some slight insight into the possible magnitude of this *if* and should have reached the conclusion that in real life the problems are more obtrusive than a brief written exposition might seem to indicate. It would be trite to say that the problems of mixed marriage are most readily avoided by avoiding mixed marriage. Yet this is true; and it may be well to impinge this platitude upon the thinking, unmarried, unengaged reader who is still free to make his choices without hurting anyone else or causing himself injury or pangs of conscience. In many cases mixed marriages turn out to be happy and successful. But the reader should be sure that he has taken a careful personal inventory of himself and the other person before he blithely assumes that he will fall into the category of the favored and exceptional.

## CHAPTER VIII

### COURTSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

Technically courtship ends with the wedding, although many of its elements may extend over into marriage. Its initiation, however, is less clearly defined. Does it begin when the child first becomes aware of masculinity and femininity? When he begins to develop a dual code of behavior, one type adapted to association with his own sex, the other to association with the opposite sex? When he begins definitely to seek out and enjoy the company of the opposite sex? When he starts activities that may eventuate in marriage? Certainly it has begun when the individual begins to date. We shall consider courtship as the period preceding marriage during which young people are getting acquainted with each other in an amatory way and during the latter part of which they choose specific mates.

Courtship should be a period of progressively intensified acquaintance. Actually, it is sometimes a period of concealment rather than of revelation. Each person puts his better foot forward and tries to make a favorable impression. To some extent this is tolerable. If one puts on too much of a display and too thoroughly camouflages his real personality, he defeats himself, for the other individual may marry someone he does not really know and this can lead only to disillusionment.

#### THE PERIOD OF COURTSHIP

Courtship should be a period of getting acquainted not only with one person of the opposite sex but also with many. The object of dating may ultimately be to prepare for marriage but not necessarily marriage to a particular individual, at least, not at first. A woman cannot know her husband, or a man his wife, well without also knowing a number of other persons for comparison and contrast. To focus love and affection upon a single individual may, as has been shown in an earlier chapter, be an indication of maturity. The process of maturing, however, must follow its natural course; it cannot be reversed. One does not

make himself mature by prematurely centering his love on a particular individual and going with that person exclusively before he has had sufficient experience and acquaintance with others to determine that it is this individual upon whom he desires to center his attention.

In courtship not only does each put his better foot forward, but each sees everything including the other person through rose-tinted spectacles. There is strong tendency toward idealizing and wishful thinking. Sometimes, because of this, promises are made that cannot be kept and expectations are built up that cannot be fulfilled. Marriage then seems like a "letdown." The reason is not that marriage is less interesting or exciting than courtship but that in marriage there is inevitable impact with reality and in courtship reality is temporarily transcended by imagination. Much is said about how people change, often for the worse, after they marry. The greater change is in courtship. Before marriage the persons put on a false front and each sees the other from a favorably biased point of view. Then, after the wedding, each returns to the real self or the spouse begins to see the real self, as it is, not as it was thought to be.

**Length of Courtship.** One of the most common questions asked about courtship is How long should it be? How long should two people know each other before they marry? A precise answer is impossible, because circumstances vary. Among the 526 couples studied by Burgess and Cottrell there was a direct relationship between length of acquaintance and happiness in marriage, longer periods of association being related to more successful marital adjustment. Among the couples who knew each other for less than one year before marriage the proportion of cases of poor adjustment was significantly greater than among the couples who knew each other longer.<sup>1</sup> Terman, on the other hand, found what he considered a negligible relationship between length of acquaintance and marital happiness.<sup>2</sup>

There is a qualitative as well as a quantitative aspect to this problem. It is not only a matter of how long but also of how

<sup>1</sup> BURGESS, ERNEST W., and LEONARD S. COTTRELL, JR., "Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage," pp. 164-167, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1939.

<sup>2</sup> TERMAN, LEWIS M., "Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness," p. 198, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1938.

well a couple have known each other. Intensity as well as duration is significant. By intensity, however, we do not mean the tumultuousness of the relationship, the degree to which the parties are "swept off their feet." In this sense infatuation is intense.

Although no one can say with any reasonable degree of definiteness precisely how long courtship should be, of some cases it may be said with certainty that the period is too brief. In student groups instances of whirlwind acquaintances continually come to light. The following cases illustrate this point. In the first, the girl graduated from college on May 30. On June 9 she had a "blind date." On June 16 he proposed marriage, and on June 22 she came to the counselor wondering whether she should marry immediately and go with him to another city. In another case a girl of seventeen went on a cruise. On shipboard she met a young man who worked on a large plantation in China. The plantation is 60 miles from town. On it there are twelve white men and three white wives; they get into town about once a month. After three weeks with this man, ten days of this period on shipboard, the girl decided to marry him and go to China, and she would soon have done so if her parents had not interfered. In a third instance the girl's parents arranged to have her meet a boy of whom they strongly approved. With some reluctance she had a date with him. She found that she liked him better than she had anticipated. On their fourth date he proposed marriage, she accepted, and he gave her a ring. The wedding followed a few months later. In all these cases and many others like them it is obvious that the period of acquaintance was too brief before commitments were made. One would have to possess the insight of a god to know another individual well in so short a time. Many other courtships are not so abridged as those we have mentioned, but they are still much too brief to base one's future happiness on the choices resulting from them.

Occasionally, one of these miniature courtships prefaces successful marriage, because the two persons are highly compatible and their relationship expands and deepens after the wedding. But the chance element is greatly increased and they are successful in spite of, not because of, the brief courtship. Their rare experience is a very precarious basis upon which to rationalize one's own desire for haste.

A type of courtship that is frequently deceiving because it gives a superficial appearance of sufficient length is that which depends largely upon correspondence. The following is a typical example; similar cases may readily be discovered in any school in which a large proportion of students are living away from home. On a trip in April the girl in this case met a boy with whom she spent about two days. After separating, they corresponded for some fifteen months. During that period their letters became more personal and amorous until at last the couple thought they had fallen in love. By correspondence, too, they became engaged. In one way they had known each other for more than a year. In another way their acquaintance was of only two days' duration. When the boy spent two weeks at the girl's home the following summer, they found that they scarcely knew each other. Their letters had completely misled them. Before the boy departed, they had broken their engagement.

**Who Takes the Initiative?** As was pointed out in Chap. I, tradition, and to some extent perhaps biology, makes the male the aggressor in courtship—openly; but the woman also plays a role and has a vital part in making choices and in developing the relationship. She is not entirely passive. The old saying that defines courtship as the process of “a man's pursuing a woman until she catches him” is not without some elements of truth. The man's role in courtship is more direct, while the woman's is indirect and more subtle, involving dress and manners, suggestion and innuendo. The subtlety of the feminine role was recognized long ago, when the British parliament in 1700 enacted the following:

That all women of whatever age, rank, profession or degree, whether virgin, maid or widow, that shall from and after such Act impose upon, seduce and betray into matrimony any of His Majesty's subjects by means of scent, paints, cosmetic washes, artificial teeth, false hair, Spanish wool, iron stays, hoops, high-heeled shoes or bolstered hips, shall incur the penalty of the law now in force against witchcraft and like misdemeanours, and that the marriage upon conviction shall stand null and void.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From *House and Garden*, as condensed in *The Reader's Digest*, January, 1935, p. 56. Reprinted with the permission of The Reader's Digest Association.

An open display of initiative or aggression on the part of the woman usually makes the man tend to avoid her. A man likes to feel that he is the aggressor and that it is he who is making the choice, even though in his more rational moments he knows that he is partially deceiving himself. After engagement and marriage, however, feminine initiative becomes more acceptable.

When considering the problem of cost, it is worth keeping in mind that there is a feminine as well as a masculine role in courtship. We have not yet reached the stage where both sexes fully and equally accept the principle of "dutch dating." There is still a remnant of the old tradition by which the man pays for food, entertainment, and transportation. Actually, this is not so one-sided as it first appears. It is more expensive for a woman than for a man to keep up appearances. Clothes, cosmetics, jewelry, and toilet articles are costly, and these are necessities rather than luxuries in the modern young woman's budget. Since the courtship process seems to be advanced and both sexes seem to derive pleasure from feminine beautification, the woman bears part of the total courtship cost in keeping herself attractive. If she were also to "pay her own way," she would be carrying more than half the burden. This is not an argument either for or against the customary arrangement. It is meant only to call attention to an often-neglected fact, one frequently overlooked by men. The tradition is becoming modified. There is no good reason why a woman should not pay all her own expenses if she cares to do so and if doing so makes her feel more independent and seems to her to raise her social status. One cannot generalize too far, because ultimately the decision rests upon the individuals concerned.

**Courtship and Social Change.** A complete analysis of the effects of social change upon courtship will not be attempted here. A few generalizations, some of which have already been mentioned in another connection, may serve to point out that courtship does occur in a social milieu and does have social forces brought to bear upon it.

The automobile, commercialized amusements, the growth of cities, the shrinkage of dwelling size, the increased use of apartments, the changed status of women, new expectations with regard to marriage, and myriad other factors are making of court-



ship something that it used not to be. As has been said already, there is today less social and parental control; and this fact puts a new responsibility upon the shoulders of the young persons making their own plans and choices. Some of them confuse freedom with license, injuring themselves instead of benefiting by the opportunities that have been opened to them.

We have reached a period of national development when the old is no longer adequate and the new has not yet been established. There tends to be confusion, transition, lack of clear-cut definition. Standards are ill-defined. Young people must rely upon their own judgments, their own conclusions, their own self-control, more than before. Many of the admonitions of their parents are of the "don't" variety and have their roots in a cultural period somewhat different from the present. Survivors of a previous era cannot be expected to set the standards for this one. Blaming parents for one's tribulations will not help. If modern young people want happy and successful marriage, they will have to work for it and through intelligence adapt their courtship to the exigencies of the day. Abandoning the old without substituting an improved new, rushing blindly through an open gate just because it is open and without ascertaining where it leads, cannot help playing a part in making the marriages of the future no better than those of the past.

**Can Courtship Persist throughout Marriage?** This question is often asked by students who somewhere have acquired the mistaken impression that after people marry they must of necessity "settle down," like mud at the bottom of a pond. Courtship, as such, cannot persist in marriage; but some of its better elements can. Its tumultuousness, uncertainty, and emotional confusion need not be retained. Romance, spontaneity, and optimism may endure; and, withal, something more deeply gratifying, more substantial, more enduringly rich may be substituted for the exciting but evanescent surface phenomena of premarital experience.

#### GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX

Throughout the United States, youth is asking for more information concerning sex, courtship, and marriage. This is most encouraging. One may well be optimistic about the marriages of couples who make such demands. Not by any means the most infrequent queries are How can I meet girls? How can I become

more attractive to boys? There are thousands of individuals of student age who are baffled by these questions and worried that they have not discovered the answers.

Unfortunately there is no formula to be offered, no potion to be administered to solve this problem for the individual. We must recognize, too, that many deep-set personality traits cannot quickly be radically changed, though some may be improved. Nor can one camouflage his real self for long. If that could be done, this false front would put one's relationships with members of the opposite sex upon an eventually disappointing basis. There are, however, some things that anyone may do. Some of them may not at first be easy; but, with perseverance and a will to succeed, they can be accomplished.

If you would meet persons of the opposite sex, you must be where they are. Church groups, campus religious organizations, school hobby clubs, are excellent places to begin. In some cities there are interest groups to which one may belong on payment of a fee. Great care should be exercised in joining one of these, since some are promoted by charlatans.

Have a wide circle of friends of your own sex. The more persons you know, the more new ones you are likely to meet. Some individuals are afraid or ill at ease in mixed groups. They erroneously assume that their feelings are unique and fail to understand that people are as eager to meet them as they are to meet others.

Cultivate a variety of interests as well as special interests. Develop a variety of skills. Be as versatile as your ability will permit. Learn especially the things that people of your age in your community customarily do together; these often form the initial setting for contacts and acquaintances. Such activities as dancing, playing bridge, swimming are almost universal. As far as getting acquainted with people is concerned, it is better to do several things acceptably than to do one expertly to the exclusion of others. If you have championship possibilities, there is no reason to avoid amplifying them. By and large, however, your goal should be to be proficient enough so that people will like to play with you, but not so expert that only a few will dare to risk the competition. Versatility is not necessarily synonymous with either mediocrity or superficiality. Nor does it imply sampling.

It is important to avoid being overanxious. People are often repelled by such an attitude, since they do not know the obtrusive individual well enough to be sure that they care to cultivate his friendship. This is especially true in the case of the girl who is "too easy to get."

It is essential that one watch appearance and, if necessary, that he make use of available resources in improving the impression that he makes. If there is a clinic in grooming or posture at his disposal, he may let the specialist in charge assist him in making a personal inventory and giving him suggestions. Appearance alone is not enough, however. It must be supported by something more than externals. There are persons who are too attractive for their own good. They come to depend so much upon appearance that they fail to develop the personality traits that make them attractive over a long period.

Cleanliness can scarcely be overemphasized. The use of deodorants and cosmetics is acceptable, but it should supplement rather than substitute for ordinary cleansing agents. Watermarks showing the line of demarcation between cosmetics and history are most unalluring. An unlaundered shoulder strap grayed with worry from fear of possible exposure is more noticeable than a beautiful evening dress. Someone has said, "An ink spot on a white satin gown is more conspicuous than a solitaire diamond." What is true of such an ink spot is true of the innumerable details of cleanliness which, when neglected, stand out in clear relief. There is an old superstition to the effect that it is unsafe for a girl to bathe during her menstrual period. There is no basis in fact for this belief. Bathing during this period is safe and healthful, provided that it is done in accordance with the rules of hygiene and provided that there is no disorder on the basis of which a physician makes a special recommendation.

People of both sexes are strongly inclined to notice manners, often before they notice appearance. Hence, it is important that one learn the details of etiquette, the principles of courtesy, the niceties of associating with other persons. There are available many good books on this subject. In fact, there are more good books than good etiquette. In this connection conversation may be mentioned. The art of conversation depends upon cultivation, just as other skills do. It may be fostered by practice, by familiar-

izing oneself with other people's interests, by recognizing that conversation is neither argument nor examination, and by realizing that it manifests three phases. Good conversation involves three slightly different skills, namely, that of initiating it, that of maintaining it, and that of closing it. A conversation should be terminated rather than interrupted. An individual who forces his associates to interrupt him or makes it next to impossible for them to say good-by without being rude is likely to make them avoid him, as well.

Too much dependence upon wealth, social position, achievements, or ancestors may result in failure. Ultimate judgments are made upon personality. People do not always like those whose status or possessions they envy or whose accomplishments they admire.

Insofar as possible, eliminate mannerisms that are distasteful to other people. The use of one's hands, the contortions of one's mouth, the way one eats, the vocabulary one uses, the jokes one tells are all noticed. Boastfulness, attempting to impress others with previous conquests, taking too much for granted on short acquaintance, making unwarranted demands, thoughtlessness, deliberate cruelty, sarcasm, affectation, and similar attitudes may be included in this broad category. A little objectivity and a sincere effort to look at oneself through the eyes of others may lead readily to the discovery of most annoying characteristics in oneself. Carrying out this suggestion implies not only the negative process of subtraction but also the positive one of developing traits pleasing and attractive to other people.

In suggesting attitudes such as those that have just been listed, there is some danger that a reader may interpret them in such a way as to lead him to adopt a pose; without being sincere, he "goes through the motions." If "going through the motions" leads one to develop new habit patterns, it is beneficial. It is not good if it leads only to covering the deficiencies with a veneer, for the insincerity of a veneer is readily detected and is self-defeating. This list should not be interpreted, either, as if each item in it were a push button and as if the only thing necessary were to discover the correct combination of buttons, when out of the vending machine would come bounding "boy friends" or "girl friends" as the case might be.

## PETTING

The evidence is inconclusive that youth is as promiscuous as sometimes pictured by his elders, by his contemporaries, or even by himself. Undoubtedly there is more freedom between the sexes today than there was a generation or so ago. There are, however, no extensive and at the same time reliable data available. No one really knows what the present situation is. There are many guesses, many questionable deductions, many broad generalizations based upon incomplete evidence. There are numerous persons who generalize upon their own limited experience or their own restricted observations. There is also much moralizing. But there is no proof of what actually exists. Youth likes to exaggerate and to impress. Given half a chance, he will tell a good story even though he has to embellish the facts in order to do so. This is especially true on a college campus, where the supposedly worldly and sophisticated make themselves the center of attention for gullible underclassmen, who, almost literally wide-eyed and openmouthed, absorb accounts of exciting sexual exploits.

Youth has also been frequently misrepresented in literature and the movies. The general public is more likely to derive its impression of college students from the latter source than from observation and understanding of campus life and personalities. On the one hand, youth has had to repudiate a false or partly false reputation and, on the other, he sometimes makes the mistake of living up to the expectations that others have set for him.

Nevertheless, there is a considerable freedom of physical contact between the sexes, and this creates a problem of discriminating between the degree of contact that is wise, beneficial, and emotionally healthful and that which is unwise, full of risk, and emotionally unhygienic. There are in common use many terms that apply to this physical contact between boys and girls. We shall use *petting* because it is most widely understood.

Physical contact between the sexes may extend all the way from holding hands to coitus. It is difficult to draw an arbitrary line on one side of which will fall contact that one would not define as petting and on the other side of which is petting as we shall discuss it. Surely hand holding or a single good-night kiss would not be considered petting. We shall define petting as physical

contact for pleasure which is an end in itself, arising from sexual desire in one or both parties but stopping short of coitus, and of such nature that in one or both there is produced an increased sexual sensitivity and response, a stirring up of sexually colored emotions, and an increased tension that can be relieved immediately only by coitus or some substitute therefor. In the absence of relief, the tension has a tendency to persist for a time.

To fall within the bounds of our definition, petting need not be promiscuous; it may be limited to one person. We shall not at the moment include the physical contact of couples who are engaged, because their problem is somewhat different and in their case caressing is not only a pleasurable end in itself but is also an expression of affection and part of a growing relationship. There is more than merely the physical element. If, however, the engagement is not *bona fide* or is entered only as a means of justifying and rationalizing the satisfaction of physical impulses, the activities of such a couple may be included in our definition.

One need not be a prude or a puritan in his relationships with members of the opposite sex. He need not "mortify the flesh" or assume a touch-me-not attitude. On the other hand, there is no reason for considering an individual prudish if he refuses to pet, or for putting a girl into that category if she refuses her escort a good-night kiss. A girl has the right to decide who may and who may not kiss and fondle her. From her point of view, a refusal may be a matter of fastidiousness. Furthermore, there is no reason for a boy or a girl to come to the conclusion that he or she is abnormal because of not petting.

It is difficult to generalize on the consequences of petting, since so much depends upon the attitudes of the two persons, their backgrounds, the degree of promiscuity, the intensity, extent, and frequency of indulgence, the specific individual reactions and responses elicited, the meanings that the couple read into their experience, the time that will probably elapse before they may marry. It may be true, as some suggest, that petting is an educative experience and forms one of the transitional steps from immaturity to full heterosexuality. No doubt it serves in part as an outlet for energies and desires as well as a stimulator of desire, and it may serve in some cases as a means of sublimation. Nevertheless, when all the pros and cons are mus-

tered, we cannot evade the conclusion that the arguments against it are weightier than those in its favor.

The reader is cautioned to remember, when perusing these arguments, that they apply to petting as we have defined the term, that they apply to premarital relationships and not to expressions of affection or to physical contact between husband and wife, and that we are speaking in terms of possibilities as well as statistical probabilities. There is some speculative possibility, but no proof, that some of the arguments apply with more force to girls than to boys because of the remnants of the double standard, the training to which the sexes are subjected, the biological and emotional constitutions of men and women. For this reason we shall address the reader as a girl. Masculine readers may readily interpret the discussion in masculine terms.

*Some girls pet as a price for popularity.* They often forget that such popularity is insubstantial and superficial. It may in boomerang fashion strike back at a girl. If she pets to be popular, she may be popular because she pets. She deceives herself into thinking that she is liked for herself and her personal qualities, whereas she is only an attractive and convenient means to an end.

If a girl fears that she will not get dates unless she pets, let her ask herself why. Has she so few assets that she must depend only upon something so limited as sex appeal? Will she admit to herself that she is unattractive except physically? Would she really be unpopular if she did not pet? It is better for such a girl to set about remedying the underlying cause for her lack of popularity than to depend upon something that can lead only into a blind alley. Looked at in this light, petting becomes a form of rationalization.

If petting is thought of as a price for an evening's entertainment—"He spent so much money on me I could not refuse"—it is a commercialized relationship similar to that which exists when a youthful secretary dates her middle-aged employer because he presents her with beautiful and expensive gifts.

*A girl may acquire a reputation for petting.* She is then likely to attract boys who expect to pet rather than others who prefer to be interested in a girl for more substantial reasons.

*Most dates are relatively brief and time limitations necessitate centering attention upon relatively few activities.* If attention is

centered on petting, a false focus is created. Other activities in which the couple should engage, if they are to know each other better and build a sound relationship that will afford them greater satisfaction over a longer period, are excluded. This puts their present relationship on a restricted and impermanent footing.

*Petting is much like a squirrel cage.* In the revolving wheel of his cage the squirrel runs faster and faster, gathering more and more momentum. When he stops, exhausted, he is at the same place at which he started. Petting, too, tends to become cumulative. It gathers momentum and the couple's emotions become more and more intense. It, too, leads nowhere. Petting tends to become like riding on a merry-go-round, something that the old Negro refused to do. "No suh," he said, "I been a-watchin' that Jones boy ride around all afternoon and he allus gits off right where he gits on and I says to him, 'Johnny, you done spent your money, but where've you been?'"

*Habitual and promiscuous petting may cheapen sex in the minds of the couple.* Also, since it is indulged in as an end in itself rather than as an expression of mutual love, it may deprive of its meaning an expression of real affection.

*A boy interested in a girl because she pets may drop her summarily and without warning if a more attractive girl appears on the horizon.* The boy turns to greener pastures.

The girl may fall in love or at least become infatuated and think she is in love. Confusing physical attraction and the arousal of her biological responses with love, she may think she is ready to become engaged or to marry. The weakness in this situation is that her relationship with the boy has developed in a fashion the reverse of that which is most stable and enduring. Instead of becoming acquainted, falling in love, and then expressing that love through their physical contacts, the couple have started with the physical contacts. If love develops, well and good. But in many cases the girl alone seems to fall in love. Some girls do not experience any arousal of responses that they can identify as sexual until their late teens or thereabouts. The first time that she becomes conscious of such responses a girl is likely to be swept off her feet, so to speak. The boy, on the other hand, has probably had identifiable sexual reactions for some time before his relationship with this particular girl began. He



may not be deceived into thinking he is in love, although some boys are misled. The result is that the girl falls in "love" while the boy does not, and the ultimate outcome is disappointment and heartache.

There are also cases in which the girl at first confuses physical responses with love, only to discover later that the boy's appeal to her gradually lessens until at length she realizes that she does not love him and is faced with the trying problem of breaking off a relationship when he is not inclined to do so. Such cases come to the counselor's attention relatively often.

*A girl who has petted repeatedly or who has frequently yielded without any desire on her part because boys wanted her to do so may generalize on her own somewhat limited experience and conclude that all boys are interested in girls for physical satisfaction alone.* She may awake to the fact that she has been only a means to an end and may resent that. At any rate, the attitude that grows from such a conclusion is not likely to be favorable for marriage. The girl may either decide that she does not want to marry at all, because of what she conceives to be the typical masculine attitude; or she may become cynical and bitter about men or marriage; or she may build up a wall of resistance that will later act as a barrier between her and her husband. The girl who habitually pets may also become disgusted with herself after a while as the novelty wears off and as she becomes more mature and begins to seek a more mature basis for her relationship with men. She may begin to see that very few husbands or wives are chosen for their willingness or ability to pet, and may regret that she was so blindly sidetracked.

*The couple may become sexually aroused with no prospect of adequate release or satisfaction, as if they were "all dressed up with no place to go."* This may make for nervous tension that may extend even past a particular date. Sometimes this tension produces hypersensitivity and an increased irritability, which strain the relationship of the couple and prevent the development of what might have been courtship eventuating in marriage.

In a case such as the following this is true. The couple had a date together practically every day, since they were students in the same school and thought themselves deeply in love. On many of their dates they were very affectionate but both were sensible enough to keep the situation from getting beyond con-

trol. Yet they became highly keyed up. They themselves were conscious of emotional strain. They observed that the more affectionate they were, the more they tended to quarrel over inconsequentials. Friends told them that, if they continued as they were, they would either marry before they were ready or would break up; and probably the friends were correct in their conclusion. The more sensible and intelligent thing for them to do would have been to be less affectionate when they were together.

If a girl becomes stirred up as the result of petting, she may unconsciously want complete satisfaction, even though she knows she cannot have it without too great cost. Her feeling is one of frustration similar to that which she would experience if she were witnessing an exciting play, only to have the curtain fall just before the plot reached its climax. As a result she may decide that she no longer likes the boy, when as a matter of fact what she dislikes is her frustration.

The question of fair play arises in connection with this matter of aroused emotions. Is it fair for a girl to pet and then refuse to go further if the boy wants her to do so? In a way it is fair, since the boy enters the situation with his eyes open; but so does the girl. Because of her biological make-up and social conditioning, her problem is less acute than the boy's. This does not relieve the boy of responsibility or make it easy. Nevertheless, the girl does have the greater possibility of rational control.

*There is the possibility of an emotional stoppage at an immature level instead of the development of a more mature relationship and response.* Petting may become a permanent substitute for fuller sexual experience in marriage later. The former is immature because it goes no further than the physical. Sexual impulses are normal and their mature expression in marriage is desirable. But there is danger of their fixating at an immature level.<sup>1</sup>

Constant exercise of control under stress in order to prevent going beyond petting may create lasting inhibitions that carry

<sup>1</sup> See CLARKE, LEMON, "Emotional Adjustment in Marriage," p. 127, The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1937; DAVIS, KATHERINE BEMENT, "Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-two Hundred Women," pp. 170-171, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1929; KIRKENDALL, LESTER A., "Sex Adjustments of Young Men," pp. 99-102, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1940; and YARROS, RACHELLE S., "Modern Woman and Sex," p. 216, Vanguard Press, Inc., New York, 1933.

over into marriage. One might compare the situation to that of a driver who stops his car at a traffic signal to prevent violating the law and "crashing the light," only to find that, when the signal has turned to green and he has the right of way, he cannot go on because his brakes have locked.

*There is always danger that in the white heat of sexual excitement perspective and a rational point of view may be superseded by emotion and control may be lost.* For some couples petting turns out to be a toboggan slide. Once they are on it, they must keep on going; they cannot get off. It would be much better if they did not get on.

For a couple to pet when either is under the influence of alcohol is like driving a car with grease on the brakes. Alcohol breaks down control. Standards and consequences are forgotten. Often a man's muscular strength is temporarily increased because of the removal of restraint. Many a girl has found herself in an embarrassing or even dangerous predicament because she dated a boy who had been drinking, permitted him to take her away from the company of other people to a place where her control of the situation was weakened, allowed him to take the first steps toward petting, and found that once he was aroused there was no way of dissuading him. Walking back, in the way often joked about but not so humorous to the girl who has to do it, is the least troublesome of all possible consequences. Cases in which girls have been seriously upset emotionally by such an experience are not uncommon. In one case a girl who attended a party at which everyone drank more or less intemperately and where everyone petted indiscriminately found herself later with only a vague memory of what had happened for part of the evening, but there was evidence that she had had coitus, with which boy she was not quite sure. She spent some frightful weeks worrying about pregnancy, which fortunately did not occur.

There is no evidence to prove that petting is invariably unhealthful, dangerous, or unhygienic. Undoubtedly there are individuals who have petted promiscuously and excessively and have later married successfully. Their success in marriage has not, however, been due to their petting. On the other hand, there are persons who have been harmed by petting. In considering the question of whether or not to pet, the individual should carefully weigh the disadvantages against his inclinations

and the seeming advantages, not permitting emotion to color his thinking. He should also consider the possible as well as the probable results. Since he has only one marriage at stake, since at best the advantages tend to be temporary and superficial, while some of the disadvantages tend to have permanent effect, and since he cannot know which of the possible consequences will affect him until it has already begun to do so, it is reasonable to suggest that he give the disadvantages and possibilities the greater weight.

**Prevention and Avoidance of Petting.** Girls often ask how they may prevent or avoid petting when boys expect it and the girls themselves do not wish to indulge. The following are suggestions. They cannot automatically solve every girl's problem. Some of them have been deduced from the writer's observations and discussions with students; others have been suggested to him by girls who have found them useful under given circumstances.

Avoid situations in which occasion for petting may arise and those where time hangs heavy and there seems nothing else to do. There are occasions when a boy has no plan for a date and the girl may suggest one of sufficiently modest proportions for him to afford it but at the same time sufficiently extensive and interesting to prevent boredom.

Stating one's attitude frankly but without ill feeling and then firmly adhering to the position one has taken is often a satisfactory solution. This need not be done at the very beginning of the first date without any provocation on the boy's part; but boys often assume that girls expect to pet, and they appreciate knowing where a particular girl stands. Some will test a girl to see how far she will go and govern their behavior accordingly. Arguing the boy out of it; jokingly dissuading him; appealing to chivalry, gentlemanliness, sense of protection, or sense of humor may be effective. In refusing to pet it is not so much the fact of refusal as the method of refusal that is likely to irritate a boy. The girl does not have to seem prudish or superior or act as if she had been insulted or attacked, exaggerating both her feeling and her refusal.

When the facts are known, a girl may avoid dating boys known to expect petting. She may also be careful as to how and by whom her "blind dates" are secured. Some girls pet on the first

date with a particular boy, because they fear losing him. They hope that after they are better acquainted petting will cease. But once the die is cast, change is difficult. A girl may give a boy an incorrect impression of herself. In order to impress him she talks as if she were sophisticated, experienced, and free. The boy concludes that she wants to pet and she is caught in her own trap.

Many girls are ignorant of masculine reactions. They do not know how sensitive boys are to the presence of girls and how easily masculine impulses are aroused. As a result, they permit the first steps toward petting to occur unnoticed, only to be surprised later when the boy's inclinations become more apparent.

It is not necessary to yield merely because a boy threatens to use his influence to make it impossible for the girl to get other dates. The best he can do probably is to dissuade a few of his closest friends or fraternity brothers. In most cases he is bluffing and his bark is worse than his bite.

Directing conversation away from topics associated with sex and petting, engaging in interesting activities together, and other devices will suggest themselves to the girl with ingenuity. Unless the girl is certain that she wants to terminate her acquaintance with the boy, she should try to do things that will put their relationship on a more acceptable plane, instead of immediately concluding friendship with every boy who has any inclination to pet. There is no reason to assume that the girl cannot effectively maneuver a boy into accepting her standards, unless in a specific case experience has proved otherwise.

There is another type of problem with regard to avoiding and preventing petting. It is the problem of the person who has a strong sexual urge, whose emotions are easily aroused, and who has an inclination to pet but is sensible enough to want to avoid it because he is aware of the possible consequences. In proportion to the magnitude of the problem for this sort of individual our suggestions are meager.

Such a person may find that having a variety of absorbing interests and activities may aid him. But it is not necessary or even helpful to force himself to be busy for the sake of busy-ness alone. If he does this, he may become bored and have his problem accentuated. Creative work—dramatics, art, hobbies, for instance—is useful. Athletics are often a boon. Making a

wide circle of friends and having a variety of contacts is better than limiting associations to a restricted few or to one person. If one thinks only of what he is missing in refraining from petting and dwells upon his urges, his problem will seem more acute than if he tries to think of what he is preparing for in the future. As was shown in another connection, it is only the rare person who can think himself through an emotional problem. The ordinary person must act and direct his attention elsewhere. Avoiding symbols and experiences that suggest sexual experience and arouse sexual interest may help. The individual knows what these are for him and may plan accordingly. For some persons pictures, movies, day-dreams have sexual connotations. He may control his behavior by controlling stimuli as well as by controlling responses. Finally, but by no means least important, he may carefully think through his code of values and, by means of sheer self-control, self-discipline, and dogged perseverance, adhere to those that he knows to be of greatest worth in a long-time perspective. Codes of values are still essential elements in determining human behavior, and through them one may transcend even his biological impulses.

### SEXUAL RELATIONS BEFORE MARRIAGE

Many young people today face the problem of whether or not to have coitus before marriage. In the freedom between the sexes this is always a potential consideration. Many students who have not confronted it in an actual situation have discussed it pro or con with other students or listened eagerly or with disgust to the recounting of other people's experiences or the reviewing of their points of view. Students want to know the facts if there be any. In lieu of facts, they want arguments, either as ammunition to be used against others' contentions or as food for thought.

In discussing this subject we shall do as we did with petting, that is, list possible consequences and items to be considered by the individual in reaching a decision of either a theoretical or a practical nature. Since we are listing possible rather than inevitable consequences, we may mention items that are contradictory. The reason for this is that not all the items apply to one case or one individual at the same time. Circumstances vary results.

No one can ascertain what the consequences in his own case will be until the experience is past. It is then too late to think of possible consequences except insofar as repetition may be contemplated. All possible effects of sexual experience before marriage are relative to the personalities, backgrounds, attitudes, and emotional constitutions of the two individuals. For this reason it is next to impossible to generalize. Since, however, no one knows what the effects of trial may be, he must face possibilities as well as probabilities.

Difficult as it may be to generalize concerning consequences, it is not difficult for the thoughtful, perceptive person to take a definite stand against premarital sexual indulgence. There may be theoretical advantages and there is no doubt temporary physical pleasure. But the eager advocates of premarital coitus often blind themselves to the risks. The question is not one of advantages only versus risks only. It is a question of one weighed against the other and of both resulting in varying proportion from the same experience. Except for the matter of temporary physical pleasure, all arguments about gains tend to be highly theoretical, while the risks and unpleasant consequences tend to be in equal degree highly practical. When all is said and done, there is usually nothing gained except immediate pleasure and that only at tremendous risk and possibly exorbitant cost. No really intelligent person will burn a cathedral to fry an egg, even to satisfy a ravenous appetite.

Suppose, for the moment, that we agreed with the proponents of premarital coitus and assumed that it did temporarily solve the problem of sexual desire and tension. We should still have to face the fact that in most cases it creates more problems than it "solves."

The only intelligent procedure for the individual is to weigh possible gains against possible risks. In doing so he must guard against rationalization and wishful thinking, against being swept away by his physical impulses, against being carried along by the crowd, by dogmatic opinion, or by preconceived notions. No matter what the individual may think about his own freedom and independence, we do live in a society with its various codes and attitudes. We do reflect early conditioning. We do have to adjust to various types of people, whether we like it or not. These facts will trail one and track him down without his being aware of it at first.

There is no reason whatever to feel inferior, unsophisticated, or naïve if one has not indulged in premarital sexual relations. Yet there are those who do have such an opinion of themselves. This is because of what they have heard from some other persons, who have indulged and with an air of braggadocio seek to give the appearance of being superior, mature, or collegiate.

The arguments presented on the following pages apply to young people who expect some day to marry. Such young people do not face the same situation as spinsters and bachelors who have passed the usual marriageable age or who expect never to marry. Perhaps other arguments apply to them. We are not prepared to say whether this is so or not; for the moment, their problems are not pertinent to our discussion.

All the arguments concerning premarital coitus that we shall list are negative. Positive arguments will be mentioned, especially in the next section, but they are so specious, so flimsy, so shortsighted that they are untenable. The items we shall list are intended to be preventive rather than remedial or condemnatory. There are four types of persons with respect to this matter of premarital indulgence: (1) the individual who has never indulged and does not wish to do so; (2) the one who has never indulged but does wish to do so; (3) the one who currently indulges; (4) the person who has indulged, regrets it, does not wish to repeat it, and wants a practical plan for the future. At the moment our arguments are all directed against future indulgence.

Because we argue against coitus before marriage, the reader is not to conclude that we are arguing against sex in general or against sexual experience in marriage. He is cautioned not to assume the attitude that sex as such is not good. Sex itself is neither good nor bad, clean nor unclean, moral nor immoral, beautiful nor ugly. Whether it acquires one or the other of each of these pairs of attributes depends upon how it is used. Sex contains potentialities for one of the most beautiful relationships in life, for rich happiness, for deeply satisfying completeness. Anything with such potentialities has also, if misused, potentialities for ugliness, frustration, disappointment, and defeat.

*There is the ever-present, inescapable danger of the girl's becoming pregnant.* There is no more miserable creature than a girl who has just discovered that she is pregnant as the result of illicit coitus. Panicky and afraid, she dares not tell her parents. She



worries about gossip and the opinions of her friends. She wonders how she can explain her dismissal from school. She is apprehensive lest the boy refuse to marry her. If he does offer to marry her, she wonders what will happen to his education or career. She is torn with indecision on the question of abortion. If she attempts abortion, she faces grave risk. Many of these feelings are shared by the boy in some cases. Together the couple present a pathetic picture.

If a couple adopt the attitude that they are well-informed modern young people, who will not be caught in the meshes of natural phenomena, they are only rationalizing or showing their ignorance. There is no 100 per cent perfect contraceptive. Employed with care and intelligence in marriage where circumstances are conducive to their most efficacious use and based upon the advice of a physician, contraceptives assure a degree of security that enables the couple to control conception and have no worry about unwanted pregnancy. The circumstances under which premarital coitus usually occurs are not conducive to careful, cautious, intelligent use of contraceptives, even when the devices themselves are of the better types. Hurry, apprehension, inadequate preparation, and especially lack of cooperation and responsibility on the part of the boy make the risk of pregnancy always imminent. When this is coupled with the fact that in many cases the contraceptive devices used are not those recommended by a physician after a physical examination, but are rather those purchased on the recommendation of drugstore clerks, filling-station attendants, or magazine advertisements, the danger can clearly be seen.

Many couples have the notion that they can easily prevent conception by using the ineffective devices they buy and that, if by some turn of fate the girl should become pregnant, she will not have the baby and then no one but the couple themselves will be the wiser. Once a girl becomes pregnant, there is no longer a question of whether or not she will have the baby. She *has* the baby. The only question is when and how the baby is to be born and whether it is to be allowed to live.

There is no such thing as induced abortion without risk. The risk is greatly decreased when the operation is performed under the best conditions, by a competent surgeon, in a good hospital. But a recognized surgeon will perform an abortion only when

carrying the baby to term would injure the health or endanger the life of the mother, that is, when there are reasons other than the women's desire to rid herself of the fetus. Such an abortion is legal.

Abortion involves greater risk than childbirth, because for the latter the mother is prepared, while the former is abrupt and violent. There is grave danger of infection or hemorrhage, and this danger is increased when the abortion is illegal. Many a girl loses her life or becomes invalid, or, if she is fortunate enough to recover, is subjected to a long period of convalescence or becomes permanently sterile.

The risk is greater in illegal than in legal abortion, chiefly because of the type of person who performs the operation and the conditions under which he works. He knows that he is violating the law and medical ethics. In rare cases the abortionist is apprehended and prosecuted. If the girl dies, he is subject to prosecution for manslaughter. The abortionist knows also, however, that in most instances he is protected, since the girl wishes to keep her pregnancy and abortion secret.

The criminal abortionist feels no responsibility for the health of the girl, because his reputation depends not upon his skill and success as a surgeon but upon his willingness to violate the law. He is interested in dollars rather than patients and may be unable to make a legitimate living. He cannot take the girl to a reputable hospital. Hence, the operation is often performed in an inferior hospital, in a private hospital controlled by the abortionist or his associates, or in his office. His instruments are often not carefully sterilized. His techniques are frequently crude and unskilled. Since his practice is illegal and undercover, he is not subject to control by the American Medical Association and feels no responsibility for maintaining the high standards of that organization. After the operation, the girl usually goes directly back to her place of residence, since the abortionist supplies no nursing or convalescent care. Little wonder that abortion takes such a frightful toll of health and life and that about one-fourth of all recorded maternal deaths are due to this cause.

Sometimes drugs are used as abortifacients. They are usually purchased on the basis of hearsay, advertisements, or the recommendation of clerks. Many of these drugs are not only ineffec-

tive but actually dangerous. Some of them may cause serious injury or death. Often a girl in her state of panic is willing to do almost anything to induce abortion. She or her "boy friend" purchases a package of abortifacients. She takes the recommended dosage and nothing happens. This makes her more panicky, and she increases the dosage until at length she becomes very ill. Even then she may not abort, since there is reason to believe that ordinarily a pregnant woman will not abort as the result of using drugs unless the fetus is dead, or unless there is some physical condition that makes abortion easy or imminent, or the dosage is great enough to be definitely dangerous to her well-being.

A type of girl almost as pathetic temporarily as the pregnant girl is the one who has had coitus and thinks she has conceived. She worries over the possible conception and her worry contributes to making her menstrual period late or to her missing a period. On the basis of this faulty evidence, she leaps to the conclusion that she is pregnant and makes herself ill with drugs or has an "abortion" performed by an abortionist who is willing to capitalize on what he knows is inadequate diagnosis and to risk her life for a fee, when she is not even pregnant.

In addition to the physiological effects of abortion there are also psychological effects. The girl has some very delicate questions to answer. When is an individual an individual? When in the development of the fetus from fertilized ovum to full-term baby does it become a human being? Is abortion murder? If she has abortion induced, does she contribute to the killing of her own child? In the lifelong period of retrospect that follows an abortion her answers to these questions may change from what they were during her state of panic. What seemed at the time like a way out may come to be the cause of deep regret and unalleviated guilt. After the flush of sexual experience and after convalescence from the abortion, the girl may regret the entire experience, yet she has neither husband nor child to counterbalance this regret. If from her experience she grows to dread sex in marriage or to anticipate it with revulsion or disgust, the psychological effects of the abortion may ramify through her whole marital adjustment.

If the girl remains unmarried and has her baby at full term, she is faced with a highly antagonistic public opinion, although

many such girls make a reasonably good adjustment and marry well later. If marriage is forced against the wills of the couple and they are not suited to each other, the girl may marry the very man who should not be her husband. Seldom can a satisfactory permanent relationship be built upon such a foundation. It is better for the child to have no legal father and the girl to have no husband than to have a man who will make both their lives miserable. If the couple had planned eventually to marry anyway, the problem is simpler. Even then, the fact that they feel forced to marry prematurely and before they had planned to do so may make the man resentful and give them a poor start, although this is the least undesirable of the several possible outcomes.

In rare cases a couple may feel obliged to marry, thinking that the girl is pregnant, only to learn later that she was not. It is not inconceivable also for a girl to become pregnant by one boy and then, after having had coitus with another boy, claim that the latter is the father of her child. Motherhood is wholly biological, while fatherhood is based partly on faith. It is extremely difficult to prove paternity to the satisfaction of a court and the second boy may be forced into marriage or, at best, have to face very unpleasant circumstances.

Not the least important of all possible results of pregnancy is the shock to the couple's parents. Sometimes they accept the facts without apparent ill feeling toward the pair and anticipate the coming of the baby with as much grace as possible. Even so, serious shock and profound regret can scarcely be circumvented.

We said at the beginning of this section that all our arguments were to be negative and all the items listed preventive. Nevertheless, the plight of the unmarried pregnant girl is so harrowing that we cannot resist a suggestion. There are not many of her type in a school population, but those who do exist need help and understanding out of all proportion to their number. This is not to be construed as a condoning of premarital sexual experience, but only as a suggestion for attacking a practical and regrettable exigency.

A girl who has reason to think she is pregnant should first of all see a physician and have an examination and a pregnancy test to determine whether she has actually conceived. She should take no abortifacient drugs and should not visit an abortionist.

If she is pregnant, she should notify the boy. Then both of them should have a conference with the physician or some other trusted adviser in whose judgment they have confidence. Together they may reach a decision concerning marriage and may devise a plan for notifying the girl's parents and for making the girl's departure from school as inconspicuous as possible, if she is a student. The couple should say nothing to anyone except, perhaps, their most intimate friends. The less they talk about their predicament, the better. Parents, however, will know about the pregnancy eventually and should be notified. With the help of the physician or adviser the cooperation of parents may sometimes be secured more readily than if the couple act alone.

In a case where the reader is the friend or confidante of the girl who is pregnant, it is often best to violate the confidence and notify someone who can help her, rather than to let her injure herself with drugs, risk her life at an abortionist's hands, or do something rash in her state of panic. It is sometimes kindness to sacrifice a friendship for a friend.

*There is the possibility of contracting venereal disease.* Figures are not available, but probably the incidence of venereal disease is not so high among college students as in the general population. Nevertheless, there is usually no simple way of telling which ones are infected. Certainly, even with the incidence low among students, one has a somewhat greater chance of contagion with an individual to whom one is not married than with a husband or wife about whose background and condition of health more is known. There are college men whose standards are sufficiently low to permit them to cohabit with prostitutes; and a majority of prostitutes are diseased. Is there any way of being certain that a boy who suggests coitus is not also one whose impulses lead him to other women?

*Fear of discovery leads the couple to seek out-of-the-way rendezvous, which are not conducive to the better type of romance.* This fear also makes for haste, uneasiness, apprehension, and emotional strain. At the particular time of their rendezvous the couple may have complete privacy in the temporary, geographical sense of being safe from immediate detection. They do not have what might be termed psychological or social privacy. Society considers the sexual affairs of the unmarried a topic for public discussion, more

so than it does the affairs of the married. Since there are two persons involved, there is the possibility of the secret's being divulged. Hence there cannot be complete privacy, with its attendant feeling of security.

Positive arguments for sexual indulgence are sometimes based upon the supposed dangers of repression. The problem is not so one-sided as that. Sexual repression must be compared with suppression of the knowledge of the act. Fearing that what one has done will be discovered, being unable to talk about it, lying about it upon occasion, side-stepping the topic in discussion for fear a slip may be made, marrying another person whose impression is that one has been chaste when one knows that this is not true are all, in a sense, components of a type of repression. Worry about them may produce as much conflict and nervous tension as sexual repression proper. A girl may endure severe dysmenorrhea, erroneously assuming that the physician can easily discover that she has had coitus and fearing unnecessarily that if he did discover it he might make it known.

*There is social pressure.* The individual may think that what he does is a personal matter and none of society's business. Whether this is theoretically true or false, the fact remains that we live in a society that makes one's personal affairs its business, whether we wish it or not. One must face the real rather than the desired social situation.

While Gulliver slept exhausted, on the shores of Lilliput, the diminutive inhabitants swarmed over his huge body and fastened him securely with thousands of tiny Lilliputian strands. Any one of these alone Gulliver could have severed as readily as he could have torn a cobweb. By their united multiple force he was held fast. Each of us is like Gulliver, held in place by innumerable social restrictions. One of these restrictions alone may seem unimportant. Their combined force tends to squeeze us willingly or reluctantly into a social mold.

An individual in society may also be compared with a man in a room with locked doors and barred windows. He is free to move about the room, but his freedom is limited by walls, floor, and ceiling. Whether it is right or wrong for society so to restrict an individual's behavior is an idle question. Society does restrict him. If most of the members of a given social group uphold certain restrictions and limitations, then freedom for the individual

comes through obedience. Violation of taboos does not free him. It tends only to draw the restrictions more closely about him. This is too broad a generalization to be universally true, but as far as sexual behavior is concerned it bears merit.

Life in society is like an insurance policy. In order to reap the benefits the individual must pay the premiums. The benefits are status, cooperation, opportunity to live one's own life, friendships, prestige, reputation. The premiums are goods, services, and obedience to the accepted ways of living. If the individual fails to pay the premiums, if for example he violates the accepted patterns and standards, his policy lapses. He loses status, is held in lower esteem, has his freedom restricted, mars his reputation, loses friends.

*Future husband or wife may be unwilling to accept the fact of premarital sexual experience with someone else.* There are many modern young people who can overlook previous indulgence. A large proportion of men, however, still insist upon virginity in their wives. In spite of the remnants of the double standard, there are innumerable women who expect the masculine counterpart of virginity in their husbands or accept the lack of it only with reluctance and regret. Here, again, the question of whether or not it is right and justifiable for people to maintain such an unyielding attitude is theoretical and academic. The real question is Can you be happy in marriage with an individual who does maintain that attitude?

Withholding knowledge of premarital experience from the other person entails a type of misrepresentation the moral implications of which may be considered serious. There is also the possibility that the knowledge may reach the husband or wife by indirect channels. If this happens, there may be shock or crisis. Trust may be permanently destroyed.

Let us suppose that an individual who insists upon premarital chastity marries one who has had sexual experience but does not tell about it. Some time after the wedding the fact is discovered. The first impulse may be to take some imprudent step, since in disillusionment marriage and love are thought to be permanently and irremediably destroyed. Nothing would be gained by such a course of action, except the salving of pride. The two married because they were in love. Sexual experience had already occurred, but the individual was chosen for his other qualities.

He is still that same person. He has had no more premarital experience now than when they fell in love. He should be judged for what he is, not for what he was. The thing that should be saved is not pride, but the marriage.

This suggestion applies only to cases in which the spouse's experience is entirely in the past before the couple became engaged, and is regretted—not to those in which it occurred after engagement or during marriage. It is not to be interpreted as condoning premarital coitus. It is meant as a practical suggestion to face the facts, weigh values, and put marriage and the happiness of two persons above one person's pride or hurt.

If before marriage the other person is made aware of the premarital sexual experience, he may then make his own choice. If he chooses to marry and accept it, he should do so without reproach and make an unbreakable rule never to flaunt the fact before his spouse by recalling the premarital experience in a critical or vengeful way.

*During sexual excitement moral and religious considerations may be temporarily suspended, only to reappear to haunt one after his return to the somewhat cooler state of normalcy.* One cannot permanently remove his biography as he takes off his coat. Early training makes a lasting imprint upon personality. It will track one down and pounce upon him when he least suspects it. As a result, sexual indulgence is often followed by a deep sense of guilt. This sense of guilt may produce regrets, mental conflicts, worry, and strain, in some cases inordinately damaging to personality and emotional health. The individual may hesitate to marry because he feels unworthy. He may have an acute sense of sin. He may be afraid to meet people, lest by some subtle means they suspect his offense. He may withdraw into a semi-imaginary world, in which he feels more secure. He may develop a feeling of inferiority for which he compensates in some less acceptable way. The distastefulness and risk of either confession or deceit may annoy him.

In a specific case, a girl had had coitus when she was in her early teens. It had occurred only once, but the feeling of guilt that was engendered persisted into her college years. She thought other girls disliked her; yet there was really no ground for that belief. As her closest friends she chose less attractive girls. She was shy and reticent. In discussing her problem with the



counselor she became very much wrought up, betraying the conflict and emotion ordinarily hidden by her reserve. Her thoughts constantly turned to her guilt and she felt that she was unworthy of marriage. The prospect of marrying without confessing to her husband made her worry lest he should make the discovery for himself. On the other hand, the prospect of telling a fiancé before marriage caused her almost to shudder. The boy in the case lived in her home town, and every time she went home from school she was terror stricken lest, when she refused to date him, he might become angry and divulge the secret. She finally grew so sensitive as to believe that a person might detect her guilt by merely conversing with her. Such a sense of guilt may warp a personality, and there was evidence that hers had not escaped entirely unscathed.

It is impossible for an individual to predict in advance of sexual indulgence what his attitudes will be afterward. He is not the same person afterward. Something has occurred that involves innumerable complications and ramifications. He will tend to look at it through different eyes.

An individual may have no sense of guilt during or immediately after his sexual experience, but later on when he has fallen in love and contemplates marriage, he may begin to fear exposure, regret may begin to gnaw at his conscience, and the bravado he exhibited in his teens may be lost in his twenties.

Since human beings so readily project blame onto others instead of taking it themselves, for self-preservation and to cover her unforeseen sense of guilt a girl who voluntarily had coitus with a boy may later turn upon him and accuse him of attack. Or from more ulterior motives she may charge him with attack in order to blackmail him or get revenge for his failure to marry her. With the attitude of our courts toward women, with all the anatomical evidence on the girl's side, and with no witnesses, the word of the girl being pitted against that of the boy, the latter is placed in an embarrassing and often vulnerable position. Even if she does not go to such extremes, however, projecting the blame onto the boy may make the girl bitter and cynical concerning men and sex and build within her an attitude unfavorable to successful marriage.

*A couple who start with the idea that their sexual relationship will bind them closer to each other may find that their experience*

*serves only as a means of separating them.* If one or both regret the episode or become ashamed, they may lose respect for each other and build up a barrier between themselves, even though they are engaged.

*A girl who yields to gain popularity, or to do a man a favor, destroys the mutuality of the relationship and reemphasizes in her own thinking the traditionally accepted but spurious belief that sexual desire is a masculine prerogative.* Eventually, if we are to found our attitude toward sex on facts instead of fables, we must get over the notion that women are neuter, that coitus is something that men demand and to which women reluctantly submit.

The girl who submits voluntarily but unwillingly, in order to become popular or to get dates, commercializes the relationship and is in a class with any woman who yields to masculine impulses for economic return.

*A girl may acquire a reputation for loose behavior.* Then boys will tend to think of her in one way only, instead of considering her as a possible wife. If a boy gets a reputation for sexual promiscuity, it may be difficult for a girl to trust his expression of love before marriage or to be convinced that he will maintain strict monogamy afterward.

*The relationship is often one-sided because the boy seeks only his own satisfaction, with no thought for the girl or her feelings.* She may be left emotionally stirred up but frustrated, or she may be left with the attitude that sex is masculine only. For her it is all give and for him all take. This depersonalizes a relationship that should be highly personalized. The girl, instead of being wanted for all her personal qualities, is wanted only because she is female. Such a relationship, too, affords the privileges of marriage without entailing its responsibilities. Under such circumstances the boy may grow to think of marriage as a trap, a price for privilege.

*There is often little opportunity for adequate preparation on the part of the girl.* As we shall see in a later chapter, this is a *sine qua non* of a rich and satisfying relationship.

*Sex is likely to be cheapened in the eyes of the two persons.* Instead of its being something through which love is expressed, something that is an essential part of a deep and growing oneness in marriage, it becomes only a means to satisfy an appetite.

*The relationship may mean more to the girl than it does to the boy.* She may yield to him because she loves him, while he is interested only in physical satisfaction and has no wish to fall in love or to marry her. If such be the case, he may drop her when his appetite has become satiated or when he discovers that she is in love with him.

Instances frequently come to a counselor's attention in which a girl is torn with indecision because she does not want to yield to her "boy friend's" suggestion that they have coitus, yet she cares so much for him that she wants to please him. She also worries about the consequences of refusal, since he has said that he could endure no longer without her. In all probability there will be no dire consequences, at least not because she refuses his request. Continence until they are married will not injure him. If he does lose his emotional balance, that in itself is fair evidence that he was unstable to begin with and she would not be safe in marrying him. Often the boy succumbs to self-pity and his request is one-sided and selfish. In some cases he deliberately plays on her sympathy to gain his own ends. There is, therefore, no good reason why she should yield to him.

If the relationship does mean more to the girl than to the boy, even though the experience does not cause the boy to lose interest in her, she may be deeply disappointed because it does not increase his interest. She assumes that it will make him care for her more, and he does not change.

*Sometimes a woman tends to focus her life around the man with whom she first has coitus.* The fact that with him she passes a mile-post in her life causes her to develop a strong attachment for him. If the man happens to be a loving husband, this tendency contributes toward happy marriage. If, however, he is a man she would not want as her husband or a man with whom she could not be happy in marriage, she may through her attachment color her whole future.

*There is overemphasis upon physical release and satisfaction.* The couple may at first believe that there will be more than this in their relationship; but circumstances make the development of other aspects difficult. For women especially the physical is only part of a larger experience. In premarital coitus the physical is so obtrusive that the couple may be blinded to other important considerations and to the whole personality of the other person. This may be true at the time of coitus. It may also

condition the attitudes of an individual so that when he thinks of the opposite sex he thinks first of physical attributes and these play too large a part in his appraisal.

Since the physical is overemphasized and the girl's experience may be incomplete and unsatisfactory, she may conclude that men are interested only in physical sexual satisfaction, that in the last analysis men are very much like animals. This is an attitude unfavorable to marriage.

Sexual experience may be roughly compared with eating. The glutton eats for taste alone. The person who eats only to fill his stomach or to get calories could do so with poorly prepared food. For that sort of eating, place and associates are inconsequential. A curbstone is as effective as a dining room, and solitude is no worse than company. Imagine a dinner table beautifully appointed, the food delectable, the guests congenial. Appetites are satisfied. Caloric content is provided. But the meal is not an end in itself. It is something that draws friends closer, warms conversation, prefaces an evening of good fellowship in which lasting, growing values are subtly reiterated and more firmly established. In this sort of eating the physical is only part of the larger picture and is combined with the social and the emotional. Sexual experience in marriage has greater possibilities for being like this type of eating. Coitus before marriage tends to be more like the curbstone variety.

Overemphasis on the physical may also lead to premature commitment. The couple confuse their physical experience with love and marry before they are ready to do so, before they are well acquainted with each other's total personality.

If a girl yields to suggestions of premarital coitus because in her estimation the physical aspect of sex has little value and significance, she is manifesting an attitude that will not prove favorable to successful marriage. When there is overemphasis upon the physical, sexual relations become subject to what might be called a law of diminishing returns. "The simpler a desire is, the more quickly its satisfaction becomes old and uninteresting—a mere habit with a minimum of consciousness. This is especially applicable to sex desire when it is divorced from the play of personalities."<sup>1</sup> Repetition of coitus before marriage is likely to become increasingly unsatisfying and incomplete, because

<sup>1</sup> EVERETT, MILLARD S., "The Hygiene of Marriage," p. 98, Vanguard Press, Inc., New York, 1932. Reprinted with permission.

there tends to be nothing but physical release. This is not true in the same way in marriage, because the physical is associated with so many other aspects of personality adjustment, with deepening love, richer experience, fuller understanding, the making of a home, and establishment of a family.

**Premarital Coitus as Preparation for Marriage.** Persons of student age, battered as they are by the modern affinity for sex discussion, bombarded continually with what often amounts to exaggerated emphasis upon both its normal and its perverted expression, are aware that sex is an important aspect of human life and is one of the basic essentials in marital adjustment. With their limited knowledge, many of them leap to the conclusion that, with sex so important in marriage, one should not enter wedded life blindly and the best test of fitness and preparation for marriage is premarital coitus. To this we must take exception. Sexual experience prior to the wedding is not good preparation for marriage. We shall attempt briefly to support this position. Some of the items mentioned earlier in this chapter the reader may interpolate into this section.

In an attempt to determine whether an individual's premarital sexual experience prepares him for marriage, there must first be established the reasons for his indulgence. It is not only the act that counts but also the motives and conditioning factors back of it. If his indulgence is due to immaturity, lack of standards, insufficient self-discipline, meager understanding of sex and its role in marriage or of marriage itself, a tendency to satisfy appetite without thought of consequences, a selfish lack of appreciation of the feelings of the other party, then it is apparent that his experience will not be preparation for marriage.

There are available no data to show that premarital coitus makes for happier marriage, but there is some evidence indicating that it may make for unhappy marriage. At least, according to some studies, in a greater percentage of unhappy marriages one or both partners indulged.<sup>1</sup>

When it is argued that an individual who satisfies his physical sexual appetite before marriage is therefore able to postpone marriage until he is better prepared, is ready to take over responsibilities, can make a more intelligent choice of mate, and

<sup>1</sup> See HAMILTON, G. V., "A Research in Marriage," Albert & Charles Boni, Inc., New York, 1929; Terman, *op. cit.*, and Davis, *op. cit.*

can bring to marriage a more mature understanding of life, the argument is put in terms of exceptions, which have avoided possible risks. Even then many possible contributing factors are not considered and there is the possibility of falling into the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy. This phrase literally translated means "after this, therefore because of this." The fallacy consists in confusing a time sequence with a cause-effect sequence: successful marriage followed premarital indulgence, therefore the latter caused the former.

Such circumstances as fear of pregnancy, lack of interest, repulsion, sense of wrongdoing may militate against satisfactory premarital experience and cause one of the parties to conclude that he or she is unfit for marriage. This is more likely to happen in the case of the girl than in that of the boy. In a not unusual case, a young woman said she was interested in the physical aspects of sex, seemed to have normal sexual desire, often became stirred up when her fiancé caressed her. The couple decided not to wait until after the wedding to have each other completely. An attempt at coitus was made. In spite of her other feelings favorable to sexual adjustment, the girl subconsciously feared the consequences of premarital indulgence. The result was that coitus was impossible because of violent contraction of some of the muscles associated with her genital organs (vaginismus). Further attempts were followed by like results. The girl at length became much concerned over her continual defeat, worried about it, and became seriously upset emotionally. She feared that she was unfit for marriage and that she could never be a wife to the man she loved. This worry cast her into a vicious circle: the more she worried, the more she was defeated; and the more she was defeated, the more she worried. She felt that it would be unfair to marry unless she proved her adequacy, and this could not be proved without marriage. She finally learned from a counselor that her only possible solution was to marry. The probability was that, as soon as the risks entailed in premarital coitus were removed, her adjustment would make rapid progress. If, however, she had not sought counsel and had broken her engagement, she might have permanently injured herself and her fiancé. If, too, her premaritally generated fears had become so permeating that they carried over into marriage, adjustment might have become difficult, if not impossible.

Even though no reaction as violent as that described above occurs as a result of a couple's premarital indulgence, they may find that their experience is not all that they anticipated. The girl especially may be disappointed and may conclude that she is unfit for marriage or that, if marriage entails this sort of disappointing experience, she wants none of it. It takes time to develop a full sexual adjustment in marriage. For most couples the gates of heaven do not swing wide at the first experience. If this first experience is based too largely on physical appeal, the gates may remain closed and locked. One cannot learn all there is to know about sex in a fleeting, abbreviated episode. Since there is usually not time in premarital sexual experiences to develop adequate adjustment, premarital coitus is neither a test for marital fitness nor a preparation for marriage.

Persons who maintain that premarital coitus is necessary as a test for marital fitness and as preparation for marriage, usually confuse fitness for marriage with fitness for mating. If all that marriage involved were the physical mating process, their argument would carry more weight. No matter how desirable it may be theoretically for a man and a woman to know in advance whether they will be well mated in marriage, it is at present in most cases either impossible or impractical for them to make the test, for the simple reason that when a couple are unmarried they are not married. Marriage adjustment cannot be tested in a state of singleness. Those who attempt a test, even when it seems to be successful, have not proved that they can live together happily in marriage. They may also develop a false sense of security, because they base their prediction of marital success on only one factor in the total situation. If the test seems unsuccessful, they have not thereby proved that they cannot make an adequate adjustment in marriage. Trial marriage, by definition, is not marriage, and for a reason similar to the one just discussed it is not an adequate test of marital compatibility.

A well-known physician writing under the pseudonym of Hotep says

. . . there is no question but that even one night together before marriage would save many a couple from years of suffering, with eventual divorce, and there are some countries in which such short periods of trial marriage are approved by custom if not by law. There is much to be

said in favour of such a custom in this country for persons who feel the need of it.<sup>1</sup>

In making this statement he shows that in his own thinking he has oversimplified the whole matter of marital adjustment.

In premarital coitus a man may learn something of a girl's reactions, but not necessarily. What he learns may be at the girl's expense. Or, because of her lack of response, he may fail to learn what he should know and may reach a false conclusion about women's sexual behavior.

Some maintain that a girl may find advantage in being initiated into sexual experience with a man not her husband, so that the first steps are associated with someone else and dissociated from her marriage. This can occur only if her experience does not cause her to react unfavorably and does not condition her against sexual relations with her spouse.

Through premarital coitus some persons may conceivably learn the art of love, but these persons could learn the same art equally well or better in marriage with the right spouse. With the wrong spouse they would be no worse off in marriage than with the wrong partner before marriage, as far as their attitudes toward future sexual experience would be concerned. To argue that coitus before marriage enables a girl to avoid the risk of psychological shock during the honeymoon is ridiculous, since she must have her first experience with some man and shock is not dependent upon the performance of a wedding ceremony.

The argument that continence before marriage makes for poor choice of mate because, in that choice, physical appeal plays too large a role, the couple being anxious to marry so that they may satisfy their sexual cravings, may be countered by the argument that indulgence before marriage would make an individual minimize the role of physical appeal in choosing a mate or give rise to an appetite for variety, either of which would contribute toward a desire for extramarital liaisons. Neither argument can be proved; one is as good as the other.

If an individual is promiscuous before marriage and has coitus with many persons in turn throughout a considerable period, there may be either established or exhibited a behavior pattern that would carry over into marriage and prevent completely

<sup>1</sup> HОТЕP, I. M., "Love and Happiness," p. 83, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1938. Reprinted with permission.



monogamous adjustment. In these promiscuous relationships each partner in turn is chosen for qualities that, at best, are only partial contributors to successful marriage. How can a promiscuous individual be sure that his spouse will always satisfy him any more than any of the other persons with whom he had sexual relations and soon found unenticing? How can he be sure that marriage will not prove to be just a more prolonged episode in a series of polygamous unions? He is in no better position with respect to making his marriage successful than is the person who has had no premarital experience. No matter how much experience an individual has had before marriage, he must to make his marriage succeed work out an adequate adjustment with a particular person.

If the couple conclude that marriage holds for them nothing more than they have experienced in their premarital indulgence, that they have plumbed the entire depth of wedded possibilities, if indulgence seems like an anticlimax preventing new discovery and adventure together in marriage, then premarital coitus cannot be said to be good preparation for marriage.

A couple may rationalize their indulgence on the basis of its being silly and sentimental to reserve some discoveries for marriage when they might make them now and then marry without emphasis on sex. Nevertheless, it is better to associate first sexual experience with the happy days of the honeymoon than with fear, secrecy, furtiveness, and "hiding behind the barn." Waiting gives sex a different meaning.

There has always been some premarital sexual freedom, especially among men. It appears that the amount has increased in the present century; how much, no one knows. We do know that it is more frequently brought to light. There is more discussion of it. There is also greater freedom among women.

Modern young people who pride themselves on being informed and sophisticated ought to be keen enough to see that, up to date, premarital indulgence has never produced better marriage. There is no reason to assume that history will reverse itself.

To assume that premarital coitus is "smart" or "modern" and is a new way of preparing for a new type of marriage is to overlook some important considerations. It is true that never before have we had the opportunity to drive an automobile 90 miles an hour. According to one interpretation, that sort of driving falls

into the category of "smart" or "modern" because it could not have been done in earlier days. It is an assertion of freedom from restraint and tradition. It grows out of a carefree attitude and a lack of responsibility. It is thrilling and supercharged with adventure. Such driving, however, does not always get one to his destination. Though "smart," it is not intelligent. Though "modern," it is not an indication of maturity. The assumption that that is the best sort of driving is not good preparation for using a car under the complex conditions of present-day traffic.

Whether premarital sexual indulgence affects a given marriage favorably or unfavorably must be determined on the merits of each specific case. It does not inevitably lead to marriage failure. It is seldom good preparation for marriage. It is never necessary preparation. Most marriages succeed better without it. None require it.

Strange as it may seem, there are more than an inconsequential number of young people who believe that ancient bit of folklore that in order to prepare for marriage a boy should visit a prostitute. It is seldom that one may safely be dogmatic with respect to any marital or premarital question. In this particular instance there is no other reasonably tenable position than uncompromising opposition and disagreement.

With a prostitute a man need have no thought whatever of his partner. His relationship with her is entirely for his own relief and entails complete satisfaction for neither participant. A man's relation with a prostitute is scarcely more than a form of masturbation. His experience is associated with a woman of low caliber who submits for a fee or through pressure on the part of a third party, who profits by her submission. She is often but not always of low mentality, may be homosexual, hence, incapable of affection for a man, may hate men and wish to get vengeance by demeaning them. Contrary to popular misconception, she is often devoid of sexual feeling and, therefore, incapable of response. Hers is a completely passive, impersonal participation. There is no mutuality. The man's relationship with the prostitute is entirely on a low physical plane. When emphasis is on the physical only, it is easy to go to excess. Excess is also likely to result from the desire to get his money's worth.

The prostitute is experienced; the young bride is not. This is especially important in connection with the latter's initiation

into the sexual side of marriage. Besides, the prostitute knows the "tricks of the trade," while the bride does not. In marriage the husband's role as initiator of sexual union and the wife's preparation for it are basically important. With a prostitute, no thought need be given to this matter. The man ignorant of feminine behavior may expect his inexperienced young wife to react as did a prostitute, his visits to the latter not only having failed to yield the information he needed but having imbued him with the wrong type of "knowledge."

A man's visit to a prostitute may end with revulsion, disgust, and guilt. These may make him feel unworthy of marriage to a chaste girl, or they may make him suspicious toward women and marriage, or even outright misogynous. He may upon visiting the prostitute find the prospect of coitus with her so abhorrent that he is physically unable to consummate the act. This leads him to conclude that for anatomical or physiological reasons he is incapable of fulfilling the role of husband. Through fear of repeated failure he hesitates to attempt coitus again and may remain single. If he marries, he may find himself afraid to have sexual relations with his wife for fear he will again fail and be humiliated by his supposed inferiority.

**Is Sex Repression Dangerous?** One of the factors accentuating the entire "sex problem" today is the fact that several generations of persons have developed the notion that they must satisfy their desires and natural urges the moment they become conscious of them. We sometimes lose sight of the whole of life because we think of its parts singly or one after another, instead of together. We overeat and overdrink. We advocate sexual freedom. We rear children without restraint or discipline because we are afraid to repress them, with the result that they develop adult bodies and have adult privileges but are not subject to adult restrictions. We plunge into installment buying with little thought beyond the immediate satisfactions arising from our purchase. We drive too fast and, forgetting all rules of courtesy, curse other drivers for their misdemeanors. Without seeming to advocate puritanism, a broader philosophy of living than that based upon impulse may be suggested.

Refraining from sexual experience is not dangerous to either physical or mental health if during the period of continence the individual maintains normal contacts and absorbing interests

and if at the end of that period normal marriage eventuates. Certainly sexual control before marriage is fraught with fewer physiological, psychological, and social risks than is sexual gratification.

In innumerable aspects of life some restraint is necessary. One cannot live in a society and secure happiness if he goes about expressing all his natural impulses at any time, in any place, with anyone. Control of many impulses is essential to civilized living. This applies to the sexual impulse just as it does to numerous others. Most people eat regularly; they do not graze like cattle. They control the concomitants of digestion. They refrain from satisfying the impulse to take another's property when it appeals to them. They do not give free vent to their pugnacious propensities. They obey the rules of etiquette, even when obedience produces discomfort. They submit to the laws of the state, even when submission is unpleasant. In countless ways they suppress natural impulses.

Sexual repression and quirks in personality often go hand in hand, but one must be careful accurately to distinguish between cause and effect. Over a long period and under unusual circumstances repression may prove unhygienic. On the other hand, individuals with already existing personality twists are frequently repressed, the repression being result rather than cause.

One must also distinguish between the problem of the individual who restrains natural impulses because he is working toward something better, such as marriage, and the problem of the one who represses impulses for some subtle psychological reason. The former is positive, while the latter is negative. Repression tends to become dangerous when there is a tug of war between desire on the one hand and the actual or imaginary impossibility of expression on the other. Even then it is not dangerous for the young person looking forward to marriage. When, because of attitudes developed through training or experience or because of the nature of the objectives toward which an individual is working, desire for expression is replaced by the desire for postponement, in order to achieve greater future satisfactions, there is no danger in repression.

In the last analysis, the problem of sexual repression for the ordinary young person sums up to a problem of control, guidance, management, redirection of energies, and conservation of natural

resources. We have for too long thought of chastity in terms of either absence of desire or repression of desire. We may better think of it in terms of present intelligent control in order to contribute most abundantly to future adjustment and achievement. This is a positive rather than a negative approach to the problem of sexual repression.

### ENGAGEMENT

Engagement affords added security of choice during the courtship period and provides the couple with opportunity to make definite final plans and to announce their intention to marry. Although it should not be a period of getting acquainted, for the couple should know each other well before the engagement, it is a period in which they grow to know each other better than was possible before and test out their reactions to a relationship more intense, more intimate, more exclusive than that which previously existed.

This engagement period gives an opportunity for the couple to experiment with the experience of being devoted to each other, or belonging to each other exclusively in certain respects. They have an opportunity to find out whether this intensified relationship will prove intellectually and emotionally satisfying or irritating. They have an opportunity of trying out the social adjustments involved—introducing each other as their future husband or wife, seeing how their tentative partners get on with each other's friends, discovering whether the adjustments of emotional and social partnership really work out well or begin to chafe. Often the period of betrothal is also a time when the couple are building up the economic resources and status necessary to start the kind of home toward which they aspire. The engagement might well be characterized, then, as the period during which the idea of marriage with this particular mate is being explored as a working hypothesis.<sup>1</sup>

**How Long Should the Engagement Be?** Engagement proper should be relatively brief. But it should come after an adequately long and effective period of acquaintance. In both Terman's study<sup>2</sup> and that made by Burgess and Cottrell<sup>3</sup> there appears to

<sup>1</sup> HART, HORNELL, and ELLA B. HART, "Personality and the Family," pp. 141-142, D. C. Heath & Company, Boston, 1935. Reprinted with permission.

<sup>2</sup> TERMAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-199.

<sup>3</sup> BURGESS and COTTRELL, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-168.

be a positive relationship between length of engagement and happiness in marriage, that is, the longer couples were engaged, the more successful their marital adjustment tended to be. These studies are, however, not such clear-cut arguments for long engagements as they appear to be on the surface. The statistics do not allow for the overlap between length of engagement and length of acquaintance, and hence do not show the effect of engagement as such. Furthermore, the studies start with married couples instead of couples contemplating marriage. Because the more successful couples tend to be the ones who were engaged longer does not mean that the longer an engagement, the greater the probability of success when the problem is approached from the point of view of the reader who is single. By the very nature of such studies, no account can be taken of those cases in which long engagements proved so trying that they were broken.

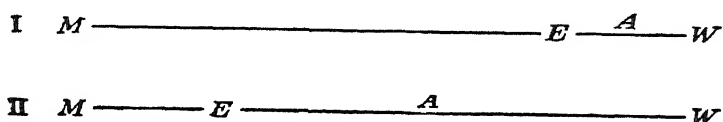


FIG. 3.—The relation of length of acquaintance to engagement and wedding

The engagement should not in itself constitute the greater portion of the total period from first meeting to wedding. In Fig. 3, *M* is the time of meeting, *E* is the time engagement begins, *W* is wedding. It is better to have the engagement relatively brief, as in I, rather than to have the period of acquaintance brief and the engagement very long, as in II. The latter is a common tendency among young people who confuse infatuation with love or who are not aware of the problems involved in too long engagement. There is no inflexible rule with regard to the public announcement of the engagement, but usually having it near the wedding (*A* in I) is preferable to announcing it too early (*A* in II).

The question: How long is too long for an engagement? is a reasonable one but difficult to answer. Much depends upon personalities, propinquity, the reason for the delay in wedding plans, how often the couple see each other, whether they date other people while engaged, and other similar factors varying in individual cases. We may, however, set up some very rough criteria and say that an engagement is too long if there is an

excessive amount of nervous tension generated; if the couple experience a sense of frustration; if they become more than usually tired of waiting; if they grow discouraged; if they become indifferent to each other; if they begin to accept the *status quo* as a substitute for marriage and lose interest in the latter; if the engagement constitutes more than a relatively small fraction of the total period from meeting to wedding. Perhaps we may go even further and say that as a rule an engagement should not extend for more than a year. This is a dogmatic statement, and we have no substantial evidence upon which to justify it. We wish to counteract the opinion so commonly expressed among students to the effect that on the basis of a few months' courtship a couple may without risk enter upon an engagement of several years duration. Suggesting brief engagement, however, is not equivalent to advocating hasty or too-early marriage.

**How Intimate Should Engagement Be?** Greater intimacy of contact is expected in engaged couples. Freer expression of affection on their part is normal. Provided that the engagement is not too long, this intimacy is acceptable because it leads toward unrestricted expression in marriage. Furthermore, some tension is expected in the engaged; otherwise, they would not desire marriage. If, however, their intimacies go so far that tension is increased to the point where it affects their emotional equilibrium, their academic or other work, and causes them to permit physical appeal to play an excessive role in their thinking and behavior, they increase the problem of delayed marriage instead of mitigating it.

Many of the queries concerning the advisability of petting come not only from persons who are inclined to be promiscuous or wish to prevent promiscuity, but also from young persons who are sincerely in love, have bona fide engagements, and wonder how far they should go and what to do about their intense desire for physical contact.

The following is a letter written by a college girl.

Do you give professional advice to disturbed young lovers outside the classroom? Bill and I are up against a brick wall of discussion and our answer isn't in the books.

As you know we are facing a long engagement, and, since we are well aware of the dangers involved and want to handle it intelligently, we have done a lot of thinking and talking about our particular problem,

which is petting. But the books are vague. They consider either the moral issue, which has no part in our present discussion, having been worked out before; or the problem of "going all the way," which, I am sure, is not our danger. That leaves a wide realm of pleasure and fear which apparently has an answer somewhere. But where can we find it?

Of course, we pet. That, I think, is inevitable when two who are in love are thinking of and planning for approaching marriage. Our emotions become very much aroused—to the point in fact of complete satisfaction for Bill but not for me. And that is what worries Bill. He feels that stimulation without satisfaction will be too much for me. Probably he is right there. But how can we go back? Won't the nervous tension be just as bad if we stop completely?

This is Bill's theory, derived from association with a teacher at school who tried to help him work this out: if an engaged couple can stimulate their emotions to the extent that each can achieve sexual satisfaction without actual union, they will be safe from physical and mental dangers for as long as they need. Is it sound and can it be accomplished? Or are we treading on dangerous ground to attempt it?

Sublimation is not the answer either. It doesn't work when we are together and we don't need it when we are apart. You see, while school is in session, we are together only during week ends. The weekdays are easy. But, during that time, we unconsciously build up our emotions so that by Saturday night we have a head start on ourselves.

So what is the answer? We have really tried to figure this out wisely; but our judgment is biased and our knowledge limited. Our particular angle of this subject can't be unique and yet it is our angle that the books seem to avoid.

We are both inclined to do a lot of thinking in such situations, so perhaps we take this too seriously. But our marriage is going to be a tremendous thing for both of us and we do want to be wise about it.

Here is an intelligent couple looking at their problem as sensibly as they can, aware of the inherent dangers, eager to do whatever will contribute most to their success in marriage, but withal very affectionate, sincerely in love, and unable to find a social pattern satisfactorily to guide them in their dilemma. They typify the modern educated young pair whose marriage is unavoidably delayed because of educational preparation and economic insufficiency. Theirs is indeed a perplexing and trying situation.

Of necessity, the solution to such a problem is highly individualized and tends at best to be only partial, since their problem cannot be fully solved until their wedding. In attempting to generalize upon it we might suggest a reexamination of the points



already discussed under Petting, earlier in this chapter, and in addition to those, consideration of the following items.

The problem of petting for an engaged couple is not all-or-none. It is a problem of drawing a line between that which enables them to express their affection, to know each other better, and to enhance final stages of their preparation for marriage, on the one hand, and that which confuses them, disturbs them, and sidetracks or disorganizes the final stages of their preparation, on the other. The attack should be made on the basis of control rather than that of complete cessation of the conditions to which they have already become accustomed. The criterion for discrimination between what is and what is not to be done should be the consequences of any particular type of behavior. Whatever makes for a happier, less strained, less fearful relationship is to be continued. Whatever increases tension, worry, or guilt is to be discontinued. Having a degree of physical release during their engagement does not solve the problem, but rather, accentuates it, because in whirlpool fashion each instance of satisfaction only leads with greater inevitability to the next and invites a greater degree of intensity in the next. Some sublimation is possible. Absorbing interests and fascinating activities in which they engage together may aid in dissipating accumulated nervous energy. Analyzing and controlling the initial steps leading toward too much intimacy may help. There is some danger that physical appeal and contact may become almost an obsession with the couple. They think of it too much; anticipate, plan on it, day-dream about it. No matter how intimate their contact may be, short of coitus, and no matter how much of a degree of satisfaction they seem to achieve, there is usually still a residue of frustration, which may as readily make for irritability as does the tension that they seek to relieve. The problem is certainly one well worth a couple's most serious consideration, but thinking about it too much may defeat their purpose. They drift into an endless spiral and, instead of improving, become more confused. If either alone or with a counselor they could reach some fairly reasonable compromise falling between the two possible extremes and then tenaciously adhere to their decision without continually reviewing the pros and cons, they might find a partial solution.

When an engaged couple pet excessively, there is always the possible inclination to say, "Why not go the limit since we are

going to marry anyway?" Anyone who takes that position exhibits ignorance of the facts, for by no means all engaged couples marry. The risks inherent in their indulgence are as great as in that of any couple. What was said about premarital coitus in general applies with equal vigor to the engaged.

In the case that follows, this as well as other points already mentioned are illustrated. A couple had been going together for some time and considered themselves engaged. At length the boy asserted that he had reached the point where he had to have coitus and, if he did not have it with the girl, his fiancée, he would have to turn to someone else. The girl thought she loved him and, in order to prevent his turning to another girl and her perhaps losing him, yielded. Throughout an extended period they frequently indulged. At first they used contraceptives, but, as their confidence increased, dispensed with them. During the entire period the girl was in a continual state of fear of pregnancy. She always kept an abortifacient on hand. On one or two occasions when her menstrual period was delayed she used the drug. Once she became quite ill as a result. For some reason, however, she never became pregnant, although there were periods weeks in length when she lived in daily mortal terror that she had become so. During these periods she was moody and depressed. Finally she came to realize that she no longer loved the boy, and the engagement was broken. The boy was bitter, and on several occasions afterward when he had been drinking he talked too much to one of his friends. The girl lived in continual fear that the facts would be divulged. She wondered how much her parents suspected and whether she should tell them. She wondered whether a husband could detect her lack of virginity and worried about the advisability of confession to another fiancé if she ever had one. She was afraid lest her previous fear of pregnancy might carry over into marriage and affect her relations with her husband. She suffered severe menstrual pains but hesitated to have a medical examination because she thought the physician might find evidence of her indulgence. All these things together have made her shun the company of boys, and although she hopes someday to marry, she has come to associate largely with girls.

**Should Engagement Mean Monopoly?** An engagement may be broken, but while it lasts it should signify what might be

called emotional monopoly; otherwise it becomes meaningless. There should be no doubt in the mind of either party that the other is his final choice of mate. If there is doubt, there should be no betrothal. Engagement is not the same as an option on a piece of property, a small fee that gives a person first choice if at any time one decides to sell or the other decides to make the purchase. An engagement is more like a down payment with the signing of a sales agreement by two persons whose decision is made but whose final contract of purchase has not yet been validated.

There is a practical problem met by engaged persons, particularly when they are students attending colleges in widely different towns. Should they or should they not date? Much depends upon how far separated they are, how often they see each other, how remote marriage is, what their individual attitudes are. In general it may be said that, unless there are weighty considerations to the contrary, such students should date, even while they are engaged.

A large proportion of campus activities are organized around couples. One must have a partner to participate in these activities. Omission of them means relinquishing enjoyable recreation and forfeiting valuable social experience. It is important that the young person become acquainted with many individuals of the opposite sex. He will not enter a cloister when he marries. He will associate with both sexes at parties, at dances, in business and the professions, in groups of his spouse's friends. Sooner or later he must learn to accept persons of the opposite sex merely as people who are not possible husbands or wives, not competitors with his chosen mate. He may like them without having amorous inclinations toward them. So an engaged student may date just because he likes to be with people and to attend college functions. His engagement still means emotional monopoly, since none of his dates is considered a competitor with his fiancée. Such dating may help to relieve the strain of separation. It is also a good test of the couple's devotion, for if their love and trust cannot withstand a simple test like this, they are not ready to marry and their engagement is insubstantial.

Engaged students frequently complain that they do not enjoy dating. The probable reason for their dissatisfaction is that instead of accepting other individuals just as people they con-

tinually compare them with the fiancé. Naturally, in most cases the others do not make a brilliant showing. Such students could have an enjoyable time if they ceased making comparisons.

Other engaged students express sincere apprehension because they do enjoy dating. They conclude that if they can find pleasure in the company of a person of opposite sex other than the fiancé or if they can be interested in the activities of mixed groups without the fiancé's being present, their enjoyment is an indication that they are not in love. Nothing could be further from the truth, unless, of course, they find more pleasure in associating with others than with the fiancé. They have failed to realize that it is possible to like other people without thinking of them as competitors with one's chosen mate.

We may conclude, then, that, although an engaged person need not feel obliged to date against his will, he may and should date unless (1) the couple are in the same town or see each other very often, in which case no generalization can dictate the plan upon which they may agree; (2) they are very close to marriage, although here, again, there are so many possible exceptions that the final conclusion depends upon circumstances and the couple's attitudes; (3) the fiancé will be seriously hurt, in which case the person contemplating dating must decide what would be the most considerate plan; (4) there is the imminent possibility of losing the fiancé. Many fiancés who object at first may gradually accept the fact of the other's dating when they come to see that it does not affect their relationship. If both are very young, the possibility of losing the fiancé carries relatively little weight, since so many engagements of the very young are premature and eventually break anyway.

Our references above have all been to dating for pleasure and convenience without serious interest in the other person, to dating no one person exclusively. "Going steady" with one individual would give a fiancé justifiable reason for distrust and for assuming that the engagement no longer had meaning. Dating without the fiancé's knowledge and consent involves certain risks. Under most circumstances, that is scarcely fair play and good sportsmanship.

**Rings and Pins.** An engagement ring is a symbol of love and an insigne of intention to marry. But the giving and accepting of a ring are not the signal for conflict to start, for one person

to begin to dominate the other, or for the relationship of the couple to settle down into monotonous, uninteresting, unspontaneous stagnation.

A ring has a standardized meaning with which everyone is familiar. The meaning of a fraternity or similar pin is not so clearly defined. Because of this lack of clear definition, a pin may vary in significance. Not only among a group of persons may there be different interpretations, but the boy who gives it may not imbue it with the same meaning as the girl who accepts it. Even when the couple carefully clarify the meaning of the pin at the time it is transferred and seem to have reached a common agreement as to what it signifies with regard to their future relationship, one of them may through time and circumstance change the meaning in his or her own mind. Then the symbol remains the same, but its significance has shifted.

More than eleven hundred college girls were asked to answer the question: What does accepting a fraternity pin mean to you? The replies gave these results.

Meaning of Pin	Number of Girls Giving Reply
Engagement—same as a ring.....	373
Going steady.....	511
Friendship.....	158
Decoration for garments.....	11
An addition to my collection.....	16

Miscellaneous answers included the following: Marriage as soon as possible. Depends on kind of pin. Declaration of love for each other—no necessary ties. Between friendship and engagement. Going steady if distance apart is not too great. Thought I loved him. Depends on the place—here it means going steady, at home it means engagement. Accepted pins because I felt honored to be asked to do so. Nothing in particular. Depends on the terms reached. Practically engaged. Future engagement. More than friendship but not going steady. Informal engagement. He was decidedly the one I loved most at the time. Going steady when he is in town. Serious about the boy but not engagement. Sweetheart. Depends on what the boy wants it to mean. Deep, strong friendship.

Lack of standardized meaning is obvious in this list. Equally obvious is the possibility of misconstrued or shifting definitions.

This latter point is borne out by the fact that, of these girls, 328 had accepted one pin, 99 two pins, 32 three, 15 four, 11 five, 1 six, 2 seven, 1 eight, 2 ten, 1 eleven, and 1 fifteen pins.

It is easier for a girl to accept a pin than to return it, because of the publicity attendant upon her acceptance. Consequently, to exercise great caution and to avoid hasty, ill-considered acceptance are minina of common sense and good judgment. No girl should permit herself to be talked into taking a pin against her will. If she does take it, she should do so only after she and the boy have carefully agreed as to its meaning insofar as agreement is possible at the time. If at any time thereafter she begins to realize that the pin no longer bears its original significance or if she observes that from the boy's point of view the meaning is shifting, the pin should be returned.

For a girl to accept a pin insincerely is deliberate misrepresentation and is certain sooner or later to hurt the boy when he discovers her true attitude toward him. She should not accept a pin because she feels under obligation to the boy for the good times he has shown her or to rationalize petting or sexual indulgence. Finally, every girl should realize that under some circumstances taking a boy's pin may give her an agreeable sense of security, while under other circumstances it may place her in a predicament.

**Problems to Be Faced during Engagement.** When a couple are contemplating marriage, there are several problems which they should carefully consider during the engagement at the very latest, preferably before. The answers to certain questions need to be ascertained to the satisfaction of both parties. They may be obtained through an extended period and through close observation. There need be no inquisition just prior to the wedding, no suspicious third-degree inquiry. (1) Are they going to plan to have children? If so, when and about how many? What is each person's attitude toward children and family limitation? (2) What is the source of the man's income? How much does he earn? What plan for the use of money will best fit their temperaments and circumstances? (3) Where will they live after the wedding—in a home of their own, in a rented house, in an apartment, or with relatives? (4) Will the wife work for wages? (5) What type of wedding will they have? When will it take place? Whom will they invite? (6) Where will they go on

their honeymoon? How long shall it be and how much will they let it cost? The honeymoon plans should be worked out by both parties together. They should not be a surprise to the bride for, after all, she is not the groom's guest. (7) What are their attitudes toward the sexual side of marriage? Are there any facts that they should obtain from reading or a counselor? Will they have a medical examination?

**Revealing One's Past.** How much of one's past should be revealed to one's fiancé? No universally applicable answer to this question is possible. It depends upon a number of factors, which vary in individual cases: the other person and his attitude toward oneself and one's behavior; what he volunteers about himself; what the incidents are that cause the question to be raised; how long ago they occurred; how much possibility of continuation or repetition there is; one's own present attitude toward the past; what has happened between the incidents and the engagement; how much danger of discovery there is or how much risk of information's reaching the fiancé through indirect channels; how much each wishes to know about the other.

No one is under obligation to bring all the old skeletons out of the closet just because he has become engaged. It is only fair play, however, to reveal anything that has bearing on the couple's future relationship. The presence of disease, previous marriage, hereditary or other defects, debts, imprisonment, and similar items should be told. Anything that may readily be learned through a third party is better told in advance.

Whatever is revealed to the fiancé should be told before the wedding. Great care should be exercised to avoid overstressing the facts for the sake of feeling that one has made a confession. Because of the hypersensitivity of both persons during engagement, it is easy to exaggerate either the revelation or its interpretation, especially if the revelation be accompanied by the manifestation of a martyr complex. What is told should be told as information that will further the marital adjustment and happiness of the couple. It should not be told only to obtain emotional release, important as this release may be. The effects on the other party, as well as the effects on oneself should be taken into consideration.

Discussion of anything that is troubling either one may be an advantage, but not if it is going to hit off complexes in the other that will

create more difficulty than the original worry. Confession for its own sake is worse than useless, since it relieves the confessor of anxiety at the expense of the confidante, who may exaggerate the offense because of the very seriousness of the remorse of its narrator, and go on to expect more terrible misdemeanors in the future. Actually not what has happened, but why and with what result, is the important question as a key to what is going to be true, and only the wisest, scientifically trained and disinterested observer can get much of an inkling as to the real state of affairs when they are told by the person most concerned.<sup>1</sup>

**Broken Engagements.** Engagements entered with best intentions and sincerest motives are sometimes broken. Those entered without careful thought and after very brief acquaintance are especially ephemeral. The younger the couple are at the time of engagement, the more likely they are to grow apart or to be swept away by physical appeal and, consequently, the greater the probability that the engagement will not endure.

Of the 1,151 college girls who replied to the questionnaire mentioned earlier, 287 said that they had been engaged once; 66, more than once. Since most of the girls were still in their teens, the probability is that many of these engagements have been broken since the inquiry form was made out.

A broken engagement is distressing, to say the least, but it is not so painful as a broken marriage. It is better for the couple to learn before their wedding that they are incompatible than to marry blindly and discover this later. The purpose of the engagement is to enable them to make the final adjustments before the wedding. It is inevitable that some of these attempts at adjustment will fail.

As a rule, an engagement should be broken as soon as either party wishes to break it. This does not mean that it should be broken and remade each time they have a lover's quarrel and then patch up their differences. When either one after careful thought decides that he cannot go on with the wedding plans, the other person should be notified at once. This notification will be unpleasant for both parties and may be extremely galling to the one notified. Once a couple have become enmeshed in a relationship as permeating as an engagement, it is usually impossible for one to get out without hurting the other unless

<sup>1</sup> GROVES, GLADYS H., and ROBERT A. ROSS, "The Married Woman," p. 29, Greenberg, Publisher, Inc., New York, 1936. Reprinted with permission.



both desire release. The longer the break is postponed, the greater the hurt will be. To marry a person against one's will or against one's better judgment, knowing that love has disappeared, is only to increase the injury immeasurably. It is neither a favor nor a charity to marry a person against one's will. Neither pride, the opinions of friends, nor the embarrassment of facing the other person should be permitted to act as a deterrent to the expression of one's decision.

Another not infrequent deterrent is the fear that the disappointed individual will commit some rash act as a result of the break. Consider such cases as the following.

After a brief acquaintance and on the basis of what later proved to be infatuation, a college girl became engaged to a boy who soon afterward joined the army. When the girl discovered that she was not in love and did not want to marry him, the boy threatened to desert the army and do something desperate. His mother tried to prevail upon the girl to marry her son, insisting that a broken engagement would result in the ruination of his future. The girl was confused and did not know what to do.

A couple had been going together for several years. The boy was sure he loved the girl and was very persistent about their marrying. For some time she had felt that she was no longer in love with him and was convinced that she would never marry him. She had repeatedly tried to explain her attitude, but he refused to listen. The boy had periods of depression and moodiness. Once after she had told him she could not marry him he became very depressed. He went for a walk, met a friend, and the two boys decided to go hunting. When the boy in question took his gun from its rack, it went off and the bullet penetrated his chest just over his heart. At the time, it was reported as an accident and the girl accepted that explanation. Later, however, when they had talked of marriage again and once more she had told him she could not marry him, he then told her that what had passed as an accident had really been an attempt at suicide. After that she was afraid that if she persisted in her refusal he would make another attempt to take his own life.

What should an individual do under circumstances such as these? There is only one intelligent plan of action: break the

engagement as painlessly as possible, take a firm stand, and tenaciously adhere to the decision. If the engagement was seriously entered and the break is founded upon a sincere change of heart, what the other person does, even if it be self-destruction, is not the fault of the one making the break. This may seem like a heartless statement; but it is not so heartless as it would be to suggest that the future happiness of two persons be jeopardized by plunging them into a loveless, incompatible union.

In the great majority of instances, suicide threats never get any further than the self-pity stage, and relatively few are ever carried out. If an individual seeks alcoholic escape from problems or threatens suicide, he exhibits an instability of personality which, in itself, would be ample reason for breaking the engagement, even if love had not died or reason had not intervened. If he threatens vengeance, he demonstrates a type of immaturity that would be highly undesirable in a marriage partner. Most people recover from the shock of a broken engagement more readily than either of the two fiancés imagines possible at the time of the break. It is easy in a state of emotional upset to exaggerate possible consequences, most of which never occur.

There are individuals who recover slowly. Some never recover and they are pitiable spectacles. But such cases do not constitute reasonable evidence for entering an undesired marriage, although they do constitute weighty argument for avoiding insincerity, short-sightedness, and premature commitment in becoming betrothed.

It is to be expected that both parties, and especially the unwilling participant, in a broken engagement will be temporarily upset and disillusioned. For the latter to do something to prevent permanent bitterness and frustration is not always easy. Insofar as possible he should face the facts, and, after allowing for a period of readjustment, start over. To assume a "her-or-nobody" attitude spells defeat. As soon as possible he should begin to date and should from the very beginning associate with persons of both sexes in mixed groups. In addition to permanent disillusionment, perhaps his most imminent danger and the trap into which he is most likely to fall is "rebound."

## CHAPTER IX

### WEDDING AND HONEYMOON

Why are weddings necessary? Why is it that two persons who are in love do not start living together without the intermediate legal and religious steps? The purpose of the wedding is publicity in the better sense of the term. It is not notoriety, as some couples seem to assume when they have the ceremony performed in theaters, on horseback, at the bottom of the sea, on roller skates, or in blocks of ice. Notoriety puts the emphasis on the *how*; publicity puts the emphasis on the *fact that*. The wedding is a doorway to new status. It is the announcement of a new relationship between two persons, a relationship in which society, as well as the two individuals themselves, is interested. For this reason there are a ceremony, records, a public expression of willingness on the part of the couple, witnesses, sanction of the state and frequently of the church, and an official, impartial, disinterested representative of the state or of both church and state. There are exceptions made for some religious sects—for example, the Quakers.

It is important to understand that the wedding, although marking the end of courtship and of premartial status, marks the beginning of a new phase of life. It is probably more important as a beginning than as an end. This is mentioned because there is an all-too-common tendency for unmarried people to think up to, but little beyond, the wedding. Movies and love stories cultivate this tendency.

The wedding does not have as its purpose the creation of personality traits that are not found in the two persons before the ceremony. It contains no magic. There is no administering of a love potion, no laying on of hands to remove evil spirits. No oracle speaks on the wedding day to communicate to the bride and groom the divine will or to teach them how to "live happily ever after." Whatever happiness they achieve is the result of intelligence, knowledge, love, and effort.

What the wedding does create is chiefly external rather than internal. It creates status, rights, opportunity. It gives the couple the right and the opportunity to live in more intimate fashion and to achieve a new degree of satisfaction. It does not provide the wherewithal to make that achievement. It does play a part in crystalizing and focusing the meaning of the couple's relationship; and therefore, it has a personal as well as a social function.

**Interest of State and Church.** Society, the state, is interested in a wedding for several reasons: (1) To safeguard moral standards. Society is anxious that no one shall depart from the mores, the accepted norms. (2) To protect property rights. The state is interested in knowing what belongs to whom. Whether or not the ceremony contains the phrase "with all my worldly goods I thee endow," property rights are redefined at a wedding. According to the law of the state, husband and wife have various rights to each other's property and to property acquired jointly during the marriage while they both live, when one spouse dies and there are no children, when one dies and there are children. The wedding is a means of showing that the couple acquiesce to the laws of property. (3) To determine the legitimacy of children. Society is interested not only in biological parenthood but in what might be termed social parenthood, that is, the assumption of social responsibility for children, their support, name, and inheritance of property. (4) To protect persons, especially women, from abuse and exploitation. The state is anxious to guarantee status to those who marry. Hence, measures are taken to prevent bigamy, fraud, the use of force, the marriage of children and of persons seriously incompetent. When prevention fails, the state may punish the person whose infraction makes it impossible to guarantee status to the other party. (5) To guarantee the legality of contracts. The wedding ceremony is not a contract in the strict business sense, but there are similarities and in some cases wedding agreements do involve contracts.

The church is interested in weddings for some of the above reasons and also because in some religions marriage is a sacrament, a means of achieving grace. Even when marriage is not counted strictly a sacrament, it is often considered to be ordained by God, and the ceremony contains an important religious

element. Phrases such as "before God and these witnesses" and "till death do you part" put a wedding directly into the domain of the religious. For this reason a representative of the church is often the officiant. This representative has another function, too, however. The state must of necessity depend upon people for the insurance of its requirements. A clergyman is a reliable person, to whom this responsibility may be entrusted.

**Who or What Marries a Couple?** In the ordinary wedding ceremony there are several possible elements involved: a license, a ring, an officiant (clergyman or civil official), God—according to some persons' belief—the state, the couple and their mutual promises. Which of these makes the two persons husband and wife?

A couple may marry without a license if they can find an officiant willing to perform the ceremony. In such a case the penalty, if there should be any, falls upon the officiant, but the marriage is usually valid. No license is required for a wedding performed on shipboard. A valid marriage may occur without a ring. Except in cases of common-law marriage and in those involving the adherents of certain religious sects, there is an officiant. If the couple believe that their wedding was bona fide, only to learn that the supposed officiant was an impostor, their marriage is usually still valid. It is not necessary to include any religious element in the ceremony in order to fulfill the requirements of the law. It is impossible to escape the influence of the state, but the state merely sanctions; it does not marry people. The state, for instance, could not marry two persons against their will. In the last analysis, then, the element without which there can be no valid wedding is found in the couple's mutual promises, their *I do's*. This mutual agreement is termed *consensus*. This it is that marries them, with the sanction of church or state. This statement cannot be taken too literally, however, for a couple could not marry themselves simply by saying that they had agreed to be husband and wife, although in some states such an agreement is a legal consideration in determining their status at common law.

**Size of the Wedding.** It is impossible to generalize or to state specifically just how large or how small a wedding should be. A wedding, like a garment, should fit. It should be appropriate

to the standard of living and social position of the couple. As is true of a garment, there is no point in having the largest one possible.

The wedding day tends to be more the bride's day than the groom's. A groom, by definition, is one who serves. The bride is the center of most attention. The change in her life and status brought about by the wedding is greater than that to which the groom is subjected. In most cases she changes her name, follows the groom as to place of residence because his vocation is considered more important than hers, gives up her own vocation, becomes economically dependent upon the husband, assumes the responsibility for homemaking, and prepares—socially, at least—to have children. Furthermore, she is more likely than the groom to be sentimental about the wedding. She wants something to remember and wants a ceremony that will be remembered by her friends. Since this is true, the bride's wishes should within reason take precedence over those of the groom, who may want a simple ceremony, quickly performed. To have friction over wedding plans because the groom seeks to impose his ideas upon the bride is a poor way to start a marriage.

**Cost.** Size and cost are usually closely correlated, but this is not necessarily the case. Cost, too, should be appropriate to the couple's standard of living. An expensive wedding out of proportion to income seems top-heavy and may mean the spending of money that the couple could better use for some other purpose, such as house furnishings. There is no value in a "big splash," as such. A too-expensive, too-spectacular wedding tends to put the emphasis in the wrong place, namely, on the wedding instead of on the marriage. The former becomes an end in itself.

Most of the wedding expenses are borne by the bride and her family. Nevertheless, as the cost increases, the groom's expenses increase also. It is true of many college students that the bride's family is well established and can afford a relatively expensive wedding, but the groom is just recently out of school, has a small salary, and in many cases has college debts. A large wedding would be a burden that he could not readily bear. This fact may well be taken into consideration in making wedding plans.

**Preparation.** Preparation for a wedding involves innumerable details and activities, from the addressing of envelopes to attendance at parties. The more orderly this preparation is, the more

foresight and intelligent planning is applied, the less will be the fatigue and nervous tension. Under the best circumstances there will be some fatigue, and every reasonable effort should be made to minimize it. To put off wedding preparations until the last minute, as some students do their schoolwork, is to invite the same sort of flustered haste in the former as is found in the latter, with an additional nervous element in the case of the wedding, which leads to increased irritability.

**Date.** The wedding date should be set by the prospective bride, taking into consideration, of course, the wishes of the fiancé and his vocational responsibilities. She has to make more preparation than he and can more accurately determine how much time she will need and when her family will be able to carry out their responsibilities. If possible, also, the wedding date should not fall during her menstrual period, not only because of sexual relations but also because during that period many girls tend to be depressed, tired, or irritable.

#### WEDDING CUSTOMS

Many contemporary wedding customs are so old that their origins are lost in antiquity. In numerous cases we can only speculate as to how they started. Such customs are *survivals*, that is, they have tended to maintain their form but have lost their original meaning and have endured beyond the time when they had a function in connection with the ceremony. They might be called social fossils or be compared to vestiges, such as the appendix.

When we know nothing of the origin of one of these survivals, or when the original function—though known—is no longer appropriate or acceptable, we rationalize the custom and convince ourselves that we carry it out for good luck. When doing something for luck savors too much of the superstitious, we are inclined to continue to do it “for fun.” In most cases we carry it out because it is traditional and we accept tradition uncritically and without question. Anything different from the traditional tends to seem ridiculous.

Marriage is a very ancient institution. There are no peoples known today, no matter how primitive, and no peoples known in history or prehistory without some form of marriage. About many prehistoric peoples' customs we know little, and there are

no facts to prove that they had marriage; neither are there facts to prove that they did not. So we may safely say that insofar as data are available, all early peoples about whose customs we know had marriage. We can assume that marriage is almost as old as the human race. When a twentieth-century couple marry they step into the stream of cultural history and link themselves with one of the oldest, most venerable, most tenacious, and most durable institutions known—an institution that has persisted in one form or another through all the vicissitudes of mankind's varied experience and in the face of innumerable theorists and reformers, because it is the most effective means thus far discovered or evolved for ensuring the values maintained by marriage. Marriage is not the outgrowth of modern state legislation and postwar romantic love alone. It is the product of the ages. One simple, concrete way of showing this is through a brief discussion of wedding customs.

The term *wedding* itself is a carry-over from ancient times. Originally the *wed* was the money or goods that the prospective groom gave to the father of the girl to secure or pledge the purchase of the bride.

The throwing of rice is so common as to be almost universal in this country. According to one theory, the rice constitutes a symbol of fertility. Throwing the rice is an expression of a wish that the new couple will have many children, or is an offering to the spirits with this end in view. The maintenance of form but loss of function in this instance is obvious, for numerous children are what most modern young couples hope to avoid. According to another theory, the rice was originally an offering to appease evil spirits bent on doing harm to the bride and groom. Or the throwing of the rice may be an outgrowth of the ceremonial eating of it.<sup>1</sup>

To show how saturated with tradition we are, how we accept tradition uncritically, and how anything different from the customary is likely to seem ridiculous, let us suggest for illustration that navy beans be substituted for rice at weddings. They are small and inexpensive. They make as much or as little impression when they strike. They have the advantage of being more readily discovered and located in one's clothing.

<sup>1</sup> EICHLER, LILLIAN, "The Customs of Mankind," p. 249, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1925.



Yet such a substitution seems preposterous. The reader's reaction to it shows how he looks at life through the colored glasses of the mores and folkways and how the use of rice has become conventionalized.

Old shoes are sometimes thrown after the couple or tied to their vehicle as they leave the scene of the ceremony. Why old shoes? In many parts of the world the throwing of shoes has been considered a means of bringing good luck. In Scotland and Ireland shoes were thrown after anyone starting a new enterprise. When Queen Victoria first went to Balmoral Castle, shoes were thrown after her for good luck. In ancient Germany, following the ceremony the bride threw one of her shoes. The person who caught it would not only be the next to marry but would have lifelong good fortune.<sup>1</sup>

The most commonly accepted theory is that the shoe signifies the sealing of a bargain or the transference of authority or property ownership. This was true among the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, and Israelites.<sup>2</sup> In the Old Testament story, when Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, returned to Bethlehem after the death of their husbands, Naomi set about planning the remarriage of the younger woman. According to the old law of the levirate, it was the duty of the man nearest of kin to the deceased husband to marry the widow, the children of the union becoming the heirs of the dead man. Boaz was related to Ruth's former husband, but there was one man whose kinship was nearer. Boaz wanted to marry Ruth. So he went to the city gate and waited for the other man to appear. Then he called together ten of the town's elders and in the presence of these witnesses stated that Naomi wanted to sell some land and whoever bought the land would have Ruth as his wife.

And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it. Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe and gave it to his neighbour: and this was the testimony in Israel. Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe. And Boaz said unto the elders and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 245-246.

Elimelech's. . . . Moreover Ruth . . . have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. . . . <sup>1</sup>

If the throwing of old shoes after a bridal couple is, as it seems, a carry-over of a means of sealing a bargain, one may readily see how a wedding links the couple to the past, for the story of Ruth is supposed to have occurred more than three thousand years ago, and the custom was already established at that early date.

The bride often wears "something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue." The origin of this custom is not known. Part of it may again be attributed to the ancient Israelites, who were bidden to wear blue upon the borders of their garments, blue signifying purity, love, and fidelity.<sup>2</sup>

The bride may wear a veil, or part of her costume may be what might be considered a remnant of a veil. It seems strange that on her wedding day, when she should be proud of her appearance, the bride should wear what is ordinarily a face covering. The veil may originally have been a means of indicating difference in status between an unmarried and a married woman. Almost all peoples in some way indicate this difference. It may be a carry-over of the canopy held over the bridal couple during the ceremony among the ancient Hebrews and still used in the orthodox Jewish wedding.<sup>3</sup> Or it may have originated as a means of disguise from evil spirits. All our remote ancestors were primitive and believed in such spirits. On her wedding day a girl was considered especially vulnerable to their influence, and in many parts of the world today a bride is disguised as a means of protection.

The use of a ring as a token or pledge is ancient. After Joseph had interpreted Pharaoh's dreams to the latter's satisfaction, the ruler said to Joseph, "See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand. . . ." <sup>4</sup> Other early peoples used rings in a similar manner. Eichler says that the ancient Egyptians were the first to use the ring in connection with marriage vows.<sup>5</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> Ruth 4: 6-10.

<sup>2</sup> EICHLER, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 41: 41-42.

<sup>5</sup> EICHLER, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-229.

hieroglyphics a circle represents eternity, and the ring probably symbolized the eternal nature of marriage ties. Among the early Anglo-Saxons a ring was included in the *wed* mentioned above. This ring was worn on the bride's right hand until the time of the wedding ceremony, when it was transferred to her left hand. Wedding rings were employed by the Christians as early as A.D. 860.

There are several theories as to why the ring is worn on the fourth finger of the left hand. It is said that in early times the right hand signified power and authority, while the left signified subjection and submission. The ancient Greeks believed that there was a vein extending directly from the ring finger to the heart, the seat of love. It may be that the ring is worn on this particular finger merely because it is the least used of all fingers and ornaments worn upon it cause no inconvenience.

In many wedding ceremonies, both bride and groom have attendants. With the possible exception of the best man, these attendants no longer have any save a decorative function. This custom may have its origin in the ten witnesses required in ancient Rome, the witnesses usually being friends of the bride's family. Or the custom may be a carry-over of marriage by capture. It is thought that in the very early days of the race wives were stolen or captured, and that parties of friends and relatives to protect the girl or assist the prospective husband gave rise to the custom of having attendants. Among some peoples today there is still mock capture at the wedding ceremony.<sup>1</sup>

In some weddings the bride is "given away," usually by her father or some other male relative. It is worth noting that no one gives the groom away. We are led to believe that this practice is reminiscent of wife purchase. In times when wives were bought for a price a girl passed directly from the authority and protection of her father to that of her husband without any intervening period of independence.

Until recently the bride promised to "love, honor, and *obey*." Nowadays there is a tendency to omit *obey*. The status of women has changed and the relationship of husband and wife has been considerably altered. Hence, there is no use in including superfluous words in the ceremony. It is significant, how-

<sup>1</sup>SUMNER, WILLIAM GRAHAM, and ALBERT GALLOWAY KELLER, "The Science of Society," Vol. III, pp. 1624 ff., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1927.

ever, that the word *obey* was until recently employed and also that at no time did the groom promise to obey; he promised to "love, honor, and *cherish*."

The custom of the bride's throwing her bouquet to the young unmarried women after the ceremony is still not uncommon, although bouquets are now sometimes composed of numerous sections wired together and ready for convenient distribution. When the bride does throw her bouquet, the belief is that the girl who catches it will be the next to marry. It is said that in the early fourteenth century in France it was considered good luck to procure one of the bride's garters after the ceremony—a custom rather inconvenient for the bride. From this grew the custom of throwing a stocking, a practice that was common during the fifteenth century. This, too, was inconvenient and gave way to throwing the bouquet.<sup>1</sup>

Many an unmarried girl has slept on a bit of wedding cake, believing more or less seriously that the man she saw in her dream would be her future husband. Not any cake will do. It must be wedding cake, as if that were imbued with some of the magical element so often believed to permeate the ceremony or in some way to be connected with it.

It is believed to bring ill luck if the groom sees the bride in her wedding dress or sees her at all before the ceremony on the wedding day. The origin of this custom is uncertain. It may be that it began when parents feared elopement and consequently being cheated out of the bride price.<sup>2</sup> It may have originated in the belief that the groom could direct evil spirits or the evil eye to the ever-vulnerable bride.

In many cases noisemakers are used before or after a wedding. A bell is rung, tin cans are tied to the couple's vehicle, or other cars follow the bridal car with horns sounding. We tend to accept the wedding bell without question and the other two types of noisemaking are rationalized as "fun." But one wonders what the origin of this custom was. It may have begun with the belief that noise frightens evil spirits, as many peoples still hold. It may be only a means of publicity, as we shall see later.

Often there is an element of slight promiscuity introduced into a wedding. After the ceremony proper the men are free to kiss

<sup>1</sup> EICHLER, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

the bride and the women to kiss the groom. The commonly accepted line drawn between those who have such freedom and those supposed to exercise restraint and to lack interest in such osculatory indulgence breaks down. There is reason to wonder whether this slight promiscuity is reminiscent of the complete license found at weddings among some of the peoples of the world whose beliefs and customs have remained unaltered for centuries.

It is not unusual for the groom to carry the bride over the threshold of their new home. In ancient Rome the threshold was considered sacred to Vesta, the goddess of virgins, and it was thought to be an ill omen if the bride stumbled over it. To prevent her stumbling, the young husband carried her into the house.

The custom of "belling" or charivari (often pronounced colloquially as if it were "shiveree," with the accent on the last syllable) is current in some communities. The practice has many local variations. In each case the twofold function seems to be the same, namely, publicity plus community acceptance of the marital status of the newly wed pair. Newspapers and other modern means of publicity and communication make a demonstration superfluous in most communities, but the custom persists in part as a survival.

The following is a description of a typical small-town "belling." Upon returning from their honeymoon, the couple were met at the train by a group of friends. Almost before they knew what was happening, the bride and groom had been whisked into a truck, which had recently been used for hauling cattle to market and had reminiscences of its past strewn on the floor. Since there were no seats, the couple had to stand, balancing themselves as best they could, while the truck moved over the rough pavement, and looking in their solemn-faced embarrassment like a motion-picture version of Marie Antoinette on her way to the guillotine. At the rear of the truck was tied a large empty gasoline tank, which boomed in thunderous fashion as it bounced along the street. Following the nuptial vehicle was a long line of cars, each crowded with friends and each with its horn sounding continuously. Up and down the streets went the noisy procession until everyone in town had heard and had seen. After that there was no doubt as to who had been married or as to whether or not the community accepted the new status of the bride and groom. The combined function of publicity and acceptance had been fulfilled.

In one form of the *charivari*, friends bring noisemakers of all sorts—dishpans, shotguns, drums, horns, their own husky voices—and surround the house to which the bride and groom have retired. They set up a terrific din, which they do not permit to abate until they have been fed either on the spot or at a local restaurant. In some cases they bring their own food as well as the noisemakers. The function again is the same as with the “belling” described above. Of this function the participants may be naïvely unaware, engaging in the ceremony because it is fun and is traditional. This is an indication of the custom’s being an old one and again demonstrates our tendency uncritically and unanalytically to accept tradition and to keep the ball rolling, so to speak, even after social change has removed part of the original function and meaning.

Five hundred Stephens College girls were asked to state their attitudes toward various wedding customs such as those described above. When a girl said that she “believed in” one of these customs, it meant that she either had at one time practiced it, intended to do so someday, or believed that the custom was effective in producing the results it is supposed to bring about. The intensity or degree of belief ranged from literal acceptance, on the one hand, to acceptance with tongue in cheek, but with a slight fear of possible consequences if the custom were not carried out, or unquestioning acquiescence to tradition, on the other. One girl said, “I’ve never slept on wedding cake but I believe in it so much that I’d be afraid to.” That is the one extreme. The other is often a belief similar to our attitude toward knocking on wood when we boast. Actually, we know that the practice does not prevent evil consequences yet we feel just a bit more secure if we carry it out. In the following list the numerals at the right refer to the percentage of the 500 girls who said they “believed in” a given custom.

	Percentage
It is good luck to wear “something old, something new, etc.” . . . . .	57
It is good luck for the groom to carry the bride over thresh- old . . . . .	70
If a girl sleeps on a piece of wedding cake she will marry the man she sees in her dream . . . . .	59
The girl who catches the bride’s bouquet will marry next.	73
The groom should not see the bride before the ceremony on the wedding day . . . . .	52
Rice and old shoes should be thrown at a wedding . . . . .	70

Below are some other beliefs and customs included in the same study but not mentioned before in this section. The number of students adhering to them witnesses again to the persistence of traditions having their roots in the remote past and now carried out for "good luck."

	Percentage
A wedding on a bright, sunny day makes for a happy marriage . . . . .	11
It is bad luck to marry on one's birthday . . . . .	14
A double wedding brings bad luck . . . . .	17
To be married in white means the bride is virtuous . . . . .	14
It is bad luck to be married in blue . . . . .	10
It is bad luck to take off the wedding ring . . . . .	29
It is bad luck to let someone else try on your engagement ring . . . . .	28
It is bad luck to rehearse the ceremony with the prospective bridegroom . . . . .	28
June weddings bring good luck . . . . .	29

### SECRET MARRIAGE

There is a difference between a secret wedding and a secret marriage. The former is an elopement and the fact of marriage is made known after the ceremony. In the case of the latter, the secret is kept for an extended period and neither the ceremony nor the new relationship is made known. An elopement may also be a "runaway" wedding which is not necessarily performed secretly but is performed in a manner and in a place that carries it beyond the influence and observation of relatives and friends.

In the case of either wedding or marriage, there are various degrees of secrecy possible. The secret may be kept from everyone except the license issuer, the officiant, and the legally required witnesses. It may be kept from parents, from friends, from an employer, from the public at large. The degree of secrecy and the persons from whom the secret is kept constitute variables that affect the arguments pro and con listed below.

There are few valid arguments in favor of either secret wedding or secret marriage, and those few apply to relatively rare circumstances. In cases where there is *unreasonable* and *unfounded* opposition, where parents insist upon lifelong celibacy, where there has been a recent death in the family that upsets wedding plans and preparation, or where similar unusual conditions obtain, secrecy may be justifiable. But such cases are relatively

uncommon. A young couple should be careful not to read into their situation elements that are not there, in order to rationalize their secrecy.

There are secret weddings and secret marriages that work out very well, but in general both are to be avoided. The arguments against them are much weightier than those in their favor. There is no opportunity for the couple's enthusiasm to be either counterbalanced or reinforced by the judgment of relatives and friends. Secrecy is all too often the outgrowth of haste; and hasty marriage frequently ends in failure. Married life is started with deception and concealment. It is not only a matter of deceiving those who might object to the marriage but also a matter of keeping secret something that one wants very much to make known. One young woman who had married secretly and kept the secret for some time explained that after the ceremony she was very happy. She loved her husband and they planned eventually to marry anyway, but married secretly in order to do so earlier. She wanted very much to tell her family and friends how happy she was and her emotions seemed to accumulate as time went on. But because of the administrative situation in the school that she was attending, she could not mention it. When the time came that she could tell her secret, her original burst of enthusiasm had waned somewhat, for she had then been married for several months and, much to her regret, she had missed one of the great experiences of a girl's life.

Secrecy involves the omission of many of the preparations for a wedding which, though time consuming and sometimes fatiguing, are nevertheless a source of satisfaction and an experience to look back upon. Omission of these preparations naturally includes the omission of shower and wedding gifts to some extent at least and in many cases such gifts have an important place in the economy of the new household.

Secrecy is very likely to offend parents and friends and often makes for enmity with in-laws. Parents are usually hurt, not only because their child has married but because their pride has been injured by their being kept ignorant of plans and events. Often, too, the girl's parents have for years dreamed of wedding plans for her. Her secrecy seems like an affront, since it has the appearance of a refusal to accept what they are eager to give or a lack of gratitude for what they would willingly have done. It



may also seem to them an indication of lack of trust, in that it appears as if the son or daughter did not feel free to confide in them.

Then, too, suddenly to find that they have a new son-in-law or daughter-in-law without having gradually come to an acceptance of this state of affairs through wedding preparations is frequently something of a shock to parents and necessitates readjustments more rapid than they had anticipated. In order to gain some idea of how parents might feel under such circumstances, let the reader imagine that he is a college student who has been away at school since autumn and has not seen his parents since he left home. Letters have given no clue to any change within the family and he assumes that everything is still as it was when he last saw them. At commencement time he looks forward with eager anticipation to his parents' attending the graduation exercises. Only his mother comes, however. When she arrives, he learns for the first time that his parents have been divorced and his mother has remarried, the new husband accompanying her to the commencement. What a shock he would experience! What rapid new adjustments would become imminent! How difficult he would find it to accept a fact so remote from his previous expectation! How his pride would be hurt because he had not been informed of the impending change!

Marriage is important enough to make it worth while to start out under the best possible auspices. Parents and parents-in-law may do much to make marital adjustment easier or more difficult. Unless it means the sacrificing of one's happiness, the cultivation of their favor is an investment that pays ample dividends.

There is sometimes a cloud of suspicion cast over a secret wedding or secret marriage. When at last the facts are made known, people naturally wonder about the reason for the secrecy. Was she afraid she would lose him? Did she not get along well with her family? Was it a forced marriage?

The best secrets sometimes leak out and then seemingly well-laid plans are completely disrupted. If the marriage as well as the wedding is kept secret, the couple find almost insurmountable difficulty in living either as single or as married persons. If they try to live in the latter way, their behavior will be subject to question by their friends. If they attempt to seem unmarried, there frequently ensues a problem of dating, especially if the couple

attend different colleges. It is all very well to make ambitious statements about letting each other date, but because of our standards of monogamy it does not work out smoothly. Husband or wife may not be able to accept in practice what seems acceptable in theory when marriage is being contemplated and it appears that whether or not they will marry soon and secretly depends upon their willingness to be liberal and broad-minded. There is also likely to be much criticism when the dates discover that the person they thought single is really married, and they have in a way been duped.

If the marriage is secret and the wife becomes pregnant, explanation is made most difficult. Friends and relatives may or may not believe that she was married at the time of conception. A person does not usually carry a certificate stating the date of the wedding so that he may show it to friends the moment their doubt and suspicion become manifest. Such a certificate, even if one did carry it, could not be published to everyone who might have an inclination to pick up and pass on a tempting bit of gossip.

This section on secret marriage is intended for the single, not the married. We should be the last to implant doubt, apprehension, or regret in the mind of a reader already secretly married. What is done is done. Such a one needs a practical plan for the future, not condemnation of the past. Our purpose has been entirely preventive. No one needs to marry secretly unless he chooses to do so; he is never forced to it. Our only hope is that those contemplating secret marriage will carefully weigh the pros and cons and decide against it, unless it is the very last resort and the only means by which they can attain happiness through a long future.

### THE HONEYMOON

Sometimes the honeymoon as a period of adjustment immediately following the wedding is distinguished from the wedding trip as such.<sup>1</sup> Since, however, honeymoon and trip coincide to some extent and in many cases, we shall use the terms interchangeably, recognizing that there is a period of adjustment of longer duration than the journey. In common parlance the terms are used synonymously.

<sup>1</sup> WALLER, WILLARD, "The Family, A Dynamic Interpretation," pp. 309-310, Cordon Company, New York, 1938.

Not every couple has a honeymoon, and there is no reason to assume that married life cannot have an auspicious beginning without one. More depends upon the couple than upon the fact of travel. Some couples choose to rest for a brief period before a trip is begun; and this plan has arguments in its favor. Some choose only to stay at a hotel in town for a while. Others leave for the trip immediately after the wedding. Still others go directly to their new home.

**Function.** The function of the honeymoon is to enable the newly wedded couple to make the transition from single to married life with the greatest facility and the fewest handicaps. Hence, insofar as possible, they should promote whatever furthers this transition and avoid whatever impedes it. It is important to realize that the honeymoon is a transition period. Marriage is not just a long honeymoon. Consequently, in some respects the honeymoon is an artificial situation and must be considered as such. Regarded in this way, it is able to provide unusual opportunities as well as to exhibit certain limitations.

Although the honeymoon does present an artificial situation and is a transition period, it need not be thought of as a brief, bright interlude between the stress-imbued, painful bliss of courtship and the supposedly unromantic monotony of settled wedded existence. To marry and go on a honeymoon is not like ascending a high peak after a laborious climb in order to get a glorious view of a grand panorama, from which, after a brief stay at the summit, one returns to the commonplace, everyday, restricted views at the foot of the mountain. To marry is, rather, like climbing a gradual slope to a higher level, from which one gets a broader view, but also from which one sees still higher levels to be reached in time and with patience. In well-founded marriages the couple do not return to a lesser experience after the honeymoon; the latter is the door through which they pass to greater experiences. Unfortunately not all marriages work out so satisfactorily; but marriage must be judged by its potentialities as well as by its failures. Knowing what marriage can be is the first step toward its fullest attainment.

**Length.** In connection with the honeymoon that involves a wedding trip there are several considerations to be kept in mind. It should be neither too long nor too brief. This is most indefinite; but no one can say exactly what its length should be because

that depends upon a number of factors, among which are the two personalities of man and wife and their finances. It should, however, be long enough to fulfill its function and at the same time short enough so that it is terminated before enthusiasm wanes and boredom sets in, before the novelty wears off and it begins to drag. This is not the same as saying that marriage is boring and monotonous for, as we have already stated, the honeymoon is an artificial situation and is subject to the limitations of any extended vacation.

Traveling has a recognized tendency to begin with enthusiasm and end with fatigue. The ordinary person is not prepared or equipped to travel indefinitely, even if he can afford it. There is, too, the probability that the bride will be eager to get back to her new home. The groom cannot help thinking of his work and the family income, for upon them depends the continuation of the couple's new-found happiness.

There is some reason to believe that it is better for the couple to set an approximate rather than an exact date for their return. In this way they may avoid unnecessary explanation if they decide to return early for financial or other reasons. In this way they may also avoid too great pressure of social obligations immediately upon their return, if they care to do so.

**Cost.** The honeymoon, like the wedding, should be of a cost commensurate with the couple's standard of living. Since it is customary for the groom to meet the honeymoon expenses, his financial condition rather than that of the bride's family should be taken as the standard. If the honeymoon becomes too expensive and too elaborate in comparison with the life that the pair will lead upon their return, it may fail to fulfill its function of enabling them to make the easiest transition to married life and may result in what seems like a "let down." Romantic though it may be to have an unusual honeymoon to look back upon, it is not conducive to marital happiness to have one's present and permanent situation compare too unfavorably with the first few days of marriage. To be happy, one must find pleasure and contentment in his day-by-day existence as well as in his memories and reminiscences.

Perhaps the best plan is to budget the honeymoon, prepare carefully so that expenses remain within the budget, and thus have a honeymoon free of financial worry. In such planning,

however, some allowance must be made for unexpected circumstances, so that there need be no embarrassment and no penny pinching. By careful planning and careful budgeting the couple may avoid spending money needed for their new home. It would obviously be a mistake to spend all that they had on a trip and to return without funds, furniture, or equipment.

**Place.** It is probably advisable for the couple to go where they are not too well known. At best, newlyweds have a way of betraying their consciousness of their recently acquired status. If they go where they are not well known, they will be better able to escape questions, knowing looks, telling smiles, jokes at their expense. Embarrassment and self-consciousness will be decreased. They will avoid being repeatedly introduced as bride and groom. There will be no social obligations or schedules not of their own making. They can have privacy when they want it.

The honeymoon need not be a busman's holiday, but the couple should avoid going to places where life and experiences are so radically different from what they are accustomed to or prepared for that adjustment becomes difficult. This does not imply that they should have stereotyped plans or do nothing unusual and different. It implies only doing nothing which will defeat the primary purpose of the honeymoon. If, for example, the bride has never traveled by water, it might be unwise to plan an extended voyage. What could be more disconcerting and less conducive to a favorable introduction to married life than a seasick bride on a honeymoon? If the couple have dwelt in the city all their lives and have had no experience of roughing it, there might be extreme risk in planning to camp in the north woods, away from town, railroad, and people. For those accustomed to crowds and noise, the quiet solitude of the forest might soon change romance into boredom. Indigestion might follow upon attempts at cooking over an open fire. Upon the heels of indigestion might come irritation. Unless the couple are unusually sure of themselves, there is some risk in depending only upon each other's company.

**Plans.** The honeymoon should be leisurely; it should not have a crowded program. The purpose is to make the transition to married life, not to get to places. The honeymoon should not be a travel-bureau, prearranged, all-expense tour on which the

traveler feels that unless he sees every monument and witnesses every spectacle he is not getting his money's worth. A simple plan is better. Dashing here and rushing there are almost sure to lead to excessive fatigue; and fatigue often leads to unpredictable behavior, which may leave scars on a marriage, especially when it occurs during the sensitive, idealized, self-conscious days of the honeymoon. A period so suffused with romantic expectation produces an increased vulnerability of feeling; and fatigue-induced irritability may give rise to unnecessary disillusionment.

**Third Persons.** No third person should accompany the couple. If the old saying "Two's company, three's a crowd" has significance anywhere, it has double significance here. We might even reword it and say "Two's company, three's out of the question." Yet there are cases in which the bride's mother or the groom's brother, or some similar person has accompanied the newly married pair. It is better, too, for them not to go with another couple. A honeymoon is, after all, not a "double date."

**Addresses.** The bride and groom may have to slip away after the wedding because of the childish propensities of some of their emotionally immature, practical-joker guests; but they should not leave without arranging with some reliable person for means of communicating with them should an emergency arise. To make this point clear let us take an imaginary example. A bride wants to leave a mailing address with her mother but the groom's wish is to be completely free and arrange for no means of communication. The bride yields to the groom's wishes. They are away for ten days. When they return, they find that the bride's father has been killed in a motor accident and the funeral is over. Her probable reaction would be to say to her husband, "If it had not been for you, it would not have happened this way." She might erect a barrier that would affect their entire future relationship. This is an extreme example and nothing like it is likely to happen to the average couple. Since they have only one marriage at stake, however, and there is always the possibility of an emergency's arising, and since arranging for a means of communication is really a trifle, it seems shortsighted to assume the risk.

## CHAPTER X

### PERSONALITY ADJUSTMENT IN MARRIAGE

#### GETTING ALONG WITH PEOPLE

The adjustment of two personalities in marriage, though presenting some unique aspects, exhibits elements that are common to personality adjustment in general. In addition to specific problems peculiar to the marital situation, getting along with a husband or a wife entails attitudes, information, understanding, and behavior similar to those involved in getting along with anyone—parents, roommate, friends, other associates.

Some suggestions concerning understanding others and improving mutual adjustment have already been made or implied. At best, we cannot present an exhaustive list. In order to do so it would be necessary to squeeze into one chapter most of psychology, much of sociology, and a generous portion of religion and ethics. We cannot hope to cover every sort of situation or every type of personality.

These suggestions are not to be interpreted as instructions "how to make friends and influence people" or "how to increase personal magnetism." They are generalizations based ultimately upon investigation and observation, intended to summarize and present briefly a few principles that may increase the reader's understanding of the behavior of others and, perhaps, if he so desires, assist him in changing his own. These generalizations are not scientific laws. They are principles, in the sense that they are broad and flexible usable suggestions, adaptable to a variety of circumstances. In this they differ from rules. The latter are rigid and absolute. They are specific do's and don'ts, applicable to particular details. Rules tend to be like straight lines. Principles are more like areas within which an individual may move about so that he may adapt them to his own situation and apply whatever fits him. Rules are designed to solve a person's problem for him. Principles help him solve the problem himself. The former "come from without"; they are more a

matter of external motivation. The latter "come from within" and are more a matter of internal motivation.

In the last analysis, there never has been and never can be a list of either rules or principles that covers all possible situations. The complexity of human adjustments both marital and non-marital prohibits such easy charting and categorizing. This limitation, however, is more apparent in the case of rules than in that of principles. Published lists of the former are incomplete, inadequate, and oversimplified. Many of them apply to trivialities and give the impression that all the prerequisites for happy marriage may be acquired through a few inconsequential directions applicable to a small number of trivial situations, making no allowance for variations, as if the rules were as specific and as effective as the use of quinine for curing malaria.

In order to differentiate the type of injunction that we are depreciating from the suggestions that constitute the subject matter of this chapter, let us examine briefly some recently published rules for marital success. The reader will then see the contrast.

Here is part of a list for men, to be applied in the early days of marriage, so that they may "start out right and be happy ever after." "Dispose of your own razor blades. . . . No cigarettes in the morning before you've brushed your teeth. . . . Rinse out the tub after you've bathed. . . . If you are a bathroom tenor, sing on pitch. . . . Be kind to the bedspread. . . . Please be nice to our friends. . . ."

Because we can make no list of rules to apply to all marriages, it does not follow that any husband and wife cannot work out a list of do's and don'ts for their own. On the basis of their knowledge of each other's personality, attitudes, and tastes they may discover what irritates and what is a source of pleasure, what is to be avoided and what to be encouraged, what is better overlooked and what should have attention drawn to it. These individually applicable rules need not be published or even expressed. They are details of understanding that make the couple's relationship smoother and enable them to get along together in more amicable fashion.

#### UNDERSTANDING OF BEHAVIOR

Underlying our discussion of personality adjustment is the recognition that most of us exhibit traits and types of behavior



that are not readily changed through our own efforts, even though our knowledge of adjustment may be increased. What is true of ourselves is also true of our wives, husbands, or fiancés. They, too, are not readily changed, either through their own efforts or through ours. On the other hand, there are traits that may be altered through effort and analysis. Fuller understanding of human reactions may contribute significantly to the improvement of mutual adjustment. If we understand why a person is as he is, that very understanding tends to make our relations with him more agreeable, even though we cannot change him. We may not be able to alter his behavior; but we may alter our interpretation of his behavior and that in itself is significant. Fuller knowledge also enables us to play a more effective role in directing our own development. Although one may not be able to change all his undesirable traits, he may through knowledge and understanding make the most of his limitations and prevent making undesirable traits worse, more obvious, or more obtrusive. The problem of the seriously maladjusted individual is beyond the scope of this discussion. Such a person is often harmed more than he is helped by the application of amateur psychiatry, whether that application be made through self-analysis or the efforts of another individual. But a maladjusted person, too, may be understood.

All behavior has a cause or causes. Perhaps, to be more accurate, we should say that all behavior has antecedents or is the outgrowth of contributing factors. To think in terms of causes as such often leads to oversimplification and mechanism. At any rate, the behavior which an individual exhibits always has roots. These may arise in relatively recent circumstances or may extend to remote childhood. They may go back to important experiences or to relatively insignificant incidents. Physiological processes also are not without their effect. The individual is the product of his experience, as we have already suggested in a previous connection. This concept, however, should not be oversimplified. Experience should not be thought of only in terms of large segments, such as crises, shocks, family life, college career. It may also be considered in terms of a continuum of change in environment, moods, physiology, contacts, ideas, emotions, and events, extending through more than 75,000

seconds per day and through every day of life. None of this experience is lost.

These two views of experience may be compared with one's contemplation of the human body. The body may be regarded in terms of arms, legs, stomach, other vital organs and apparently unitary parts, with their functions or dysfunctions and injuries considered as single experiences. On the other hand, the body may be thought of in terms of microscopic cells, which in aggregates form organs whose functions and changes may be interpreted as the product of minute influences and infinitesimal physicochemical processes. Just as the body's functions are the sum total of metabolic changes in untold millions of cells, so the individual's behavior and personality are the end product of innumerable experiences, some great, some small; some remembered, most forgotten.

Since we live in only the instantaneous present, the roots of behavior must of necessity be in the past. An individual may change his attitude toward the past or may through present and future experience alter its products; but he cannot change the past itself. It leaves so indelible an impression upon him that he can change only through building up new patterns of behavior. He cannot change merely by saying so or by having someone else tell him to do so. His experiences may lead him to make a decision involving change, so that he seems to alter his conduct by voluntary act of will. Actually, however, he alters his conduct because of his experience. Remote past experience forms a matrix or background in which more immediate experience serves as the precipitating cause of his present behavior or future changes; but he is still the product of his biography.

When confronted with a new situation, an individual reacts effectively or ineffectively, depending upon how and to what degree the new is related to the old and bound up with experience. The past may have laid upon him a hand so heavy that he cannot accept or assimilate the new—for example, the parent who is opposed to the freedom taken for granted by his children. In such a case, the new is resisted because the old has become crystallized, so to speak, and the individual has no interest in assimilating the new. In other instances he may be interested in solving a new problem but be unable to do so effectively

because there has been nothing in his experience to which the problem may be related or because he relates the new to aspects of the old which enable him to reach only an inadequate solution. In a specific instance, a woman trained as a nurse and having had considerable hospital experience before marriage is having difficulty in adjusting to the marital situation because she treats her husband as if he were a patient. The firm tones and positive directions effective in caring for the cantankerous sick are resented by the husband, who expects mutual give-and-take and resists her efforts to direct and command him. There is no doubt of the wife's devotion and good intentions; but she is meeting the marital situation ineffectively because she interprets the new only in terms of the old. When an individual is faced with a problem that has some essential elements with which he is entirely unfamiliar, his solution will be inadequate, if indeed there can be any at all. Suppose one were to attempt to navigate a transport plane from New York to Los Angeles. The result would probably be disastrous for, unless he has had training in aeronautics, there is nothing in his experience to which he might relate some essential elements of the new problem.

**Conditioning.** In understanding the roots of behavior one of the most important and fruitful concepts is that of *conditioning*. Let us imagine that the reader is about to order dinner in a restaurant. As first course the menu suggests oyster or shrimp cocktail. Next there is a choice of one of the following: roast turkey with giblet dressing, creamed sweetbreads, or lobster. The majority of readers would find no insurmountable difficulty in reaching a decision. Now imagine that rattlesnake meat were substituted for one of the items on the menu. The majority of readers would not only not choose it but would have a strong feeling of revulsion at the very thought of eating it. Yet rattlesnake meat is used as food. It is occasionally listed on restaurant menus. It may be purchased in cans ready for use. Fundamentally, a lobster or an oyster is no more aesthetic, attractive, or respectable than a rattlesnake. Why, then, is one's reaction to the snake so different? The answer is *conditioning*.

A child will reach for a snake as readily as for a rabbit until, through his parents' "no, no's" and cries of alarm, he becomes conditioned against the former, that is, he associates "snake" with withdrawal rather than with reaching. If he were pre-

sented with a white rabbit and each time he reached for it his act were accompanied by a terrifying noise (as in some experiments), he would soon associate "rabbit" and terror, so that sight of the animal would make him cry and seek to escape. If, in addition to this early experience, he were subjected to a cultural tradition and to a literary and social experience all of which were permeated with the idea that rabbit was not only dangerous but repulsive and a symbol of evil, his attitude toward rabbits would be similar to the attitude toward snakes, and he would have just as great aversion to including rabbit in his diet.

If in an experiment a person is subjected to an electric shock, he jumps. If at the moment of shock a light is flashed and this procedure is repeated a sufficient number of times, the individual becomes so conditioned that the light alone causes him to jump. "Light" becomes associated with "jump" rather than with "shock" and is then a substitute stimulus for the original shock.

It is in this way that many of our responses are built up. Conditioning accounts for most of our fears, tastes, attitudes. Fears of animals, of high places, of enclosed places, of men, sex, or marriage develop in this manner. Food tastes are partly the result of conditioning, and in this conditioning custom plays a significant role. Some foods are palatable, others are not so, because of conditioning. The same food may be accepted under one name but may seem disgusting under another. Some foods are called by their biological terms—for example, liver, tongue, heart. These terms when employed in connection with diet are used in a conventional rather than an anatomical sense. "Liver" means something on a dinner plate, not a bodily organ. All one needs to do to show how thoroughly conditioned he is to mention other foods by their anatomical names. Suppose for example, the diner we mentioned at the beginning of this section, instead of having to choose between roast turkey with giblet dressing, creamed sweetbreads, and lobster, had been confronted with a choice between turkey with viscera, creamed thymus gland, and arthropod. His relish of the dinner would probably be somewhat altered.

An individual may become conditioned through a single experience that leaves an indelible impression, or through the repetition of a lesser experience. One serious accident may make a person fear riding in an automobile. One case of overeating may make

a child lose his appetite for a given food. A child's learning not to touch things that do not belong to him comes as the result of repeated "no, no's" or slight punishment, but his learning not to touch a hot stove or electric outlet may be the result of one experience.

**Complexes.** It is in this way that complexes are built up. A complex is a group or series of connected reactions, set off, so to speak, by a single stimulus, which may have little direct connection with the total response and which produces a response often out of proportion to the intensity of the stimulus. The whole complex may take on the emotional tone of one of the elements in it. Usually the emotional tone is rather marked.

Knowing that the illustration is oversimplified, we might compare a complex with ten pins all of which fall when the bowling ball strikes the center pin correctly. All fall, not because the ball strikes every pin, but because one pin strikes another. We might also compare a complex with a series of dominoes set in line. When the first domino is touched it falls against the second, and so on until they have all fallen.

Everyone has complexes, some good, some not. Let us suppose that the reader receives a letter from his fiancée. Actually, the letter is nothing more than ink on paper and his reading is merely the interpretation of symbols. But the letter arouses a chain of responses, a complex, the emotional tone of which is quite out of proportion to the intensity of the stimulus when the latter is thought of as paper and ink. In a way, the letter is a substitute for the fiancée, and the response to the letter is similar to the response to the actual presence of the fiancée, though less intense than that would be. Consider the attitude of some persons toward women's smoking. The sight or the mere thought of a woman with a cigarette sets off a complex of ideas, attitudes, and opinions involving not only smoking but often immorality, the "double standard," sin, and religion. The emotional tone of the response is out of proportion to the stimulus, which in the last analysis is merely the oxidation of plant leaves wrapped in wood pulp.

In almost any group one may readily start a heated discussion by mentioning race, politics, or religion. People tend to have complexes related to these subjects. Money is another frequent focal point for complexes.

If through experience an individual has developed a feeling of inferiority, his complex may be brought into play by the slightest stimulus. Someone says something that he interprets as disparaging, someone looks at him, or does something equally insignificant. His response is out of proportion to the intensity of the stimulus. The term *inferiority complex* is much abused, much overworked, and often used very loosely, but it is useful in making clear how a cluster of responses may form around one original response and assume an intense emotional tone.

If one person is aware of another person's complexes, he may go a long way toward making their mutual relationship more harmonious by setting off the desirable complexes and avoiding the stimuli that set off the others. For example, if through early conditioning a woman has built up a complex of a pleasant, romantic type that may be touched off by flowers, the way is open for her husband to increase their mutual happiness by a very simple means. If on the other hand, she has built up a complex involving money, sex, or some other aspect of marriage the arousing of which produces tension, aggravation, fear, or equally undesirable responses, the setting off of such a complex should, when possible, be avoided.

Complexes are altered or removed through experience and reconditioning. They cannot be removed by argument or demand. No one can pull his complexes out by the roots and remove them from his personality by act of will alone. Most human beings live more by their emotions than by their intellectual processes, if we may so express it. People tend to feel more than they tend to think. Consequently, logic and reason are frequently ineffective in influencing behavior. Only the rare person changes his behavior by logic rather than by experience and conditioning.

**Negative Adaptation.** One aspect of conditioning, in the broad sense, is *negative adaptation*.<sup>1</sup> A stimulus may lose its original effectiveness and fail to evoke any response. A student may become accustomed to noise which at first prevented concentration upon studies. Personal peculiarities which at first were irritating may gradually come to be overlooked. A girl who dislikes housework when it is done in her parental home may

<sup>1</sup> REXROAD, CARL, "General Psychology for College Students," pp. 157-158, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1929.

overcome this dislike when she does it in her own home. In such cases the response is lost because the stimulus is followed by many other stimuli and the first one loses its effectiveness in producing a given simple response. Negative adaptation is one part of personality adjustment. In connection with some aspects of getting along with people, it is something that may be cultivated.

**Mores and Folkways.** One important factor in the conditioning process, a factor that has been touched upon in previous connections, is custom or, more technically, the *mores* and *folkways*, which are the accepted customs of the group, the former being considered the more essential and unchangeable. Mores and folkways vary from group to group. They put colored glasses upon each individual reared under their influence, determining in large measure his tastes, attitudes, and point of view.

Let us imagine that a student leaves a college building and meets her fiancé, who is making an unexpected visit. When she sees him, she screams, rushes toward him, throws her arms around him, and—they rub noses. Your reaction to this illustration shows how thoroughly conditioned by the mores you are. To rub noses seems ridiculous; to kiss would seem not only more acceptable but more sensible. Yet fundamentally there are no more logical arguments for one than for the other. The difference in attitude that you manifest is due to the fact that you look at the situation through the colored glasses of the mores.

In similar fashion, the mores determine to considerable degree our attitudes toward morals, monogamy, courtship, property, religion, and numerous other things which are part and parcel of our particular culture and way of life. Since the mores and folkways vary from group to group, area to area, and time to time, one must in associating with other people take into consideration those that have played a part in conditioning their behavior.

**Bodily Processes.** Behavior is affected by deep-set processes physiological and otherwise. Fatigue, hunger, illness, moods, and worry all leave their mark. There is considerable variation in the degree to which individuals are able to transcend such processes and by control to keep their behavior on even keel. Most of us become different persons as our physiology changes. A person who can control his anger when he feels well may not

be able to do so when ill. An individual may be more irritable when hungry than when well fed. A dream may produce a mood that affects the behavior of the following day. Worry may cause a person to become irritable, to lose ambition, or to be less affectionate than usual. Hence, such processes must be taken into account and on occasion allowance must be made for them.

**Frustration.** Most persons have a tendency to become angry or irritated when their desires are blocked or frustrated. This frustration may be of almost any type, from having to wait for someone who is late for an appointment to continual failure in one's work. Whenever it is possible to remove the cause of the frustration, mutual relationships become more smooth. Irritation is the result of a relationship. It may be increased by increasing the irritant or by decreasing resistance. In considering the things that irritate one, care must be taken not to blame the former when the latter is the cause. On the other hand, in considering the things that irritate others, one must not expect other people to increase resistance so that there is no longer any need to decrease the irritant.

**Surface Phenomena.** In studying the roots, causes, antecedents of an individual's behavior, it is a useful working plan to continue analysis beyond (1) surface phenomena, that is, the seemingly most obvious or apparent causes, and (2) the causes suggested by the individual himself, unless he is known to be a careful observer with an objective attitude. To illustrate: A man's family suffers through lack of income. The verdict of those who know him is that he is lazy and therefore will not work. Laziness seems to be the cause of his behavior. In reality, laziness is a symptom. The real cause may be glandular dysfunction or some psychological quirk. To stop with the laziness would result in failure to understand the man. A wife is unhappy because her husband is domineering. Friends say he is egotistical and his opinion of himself is so high that he imposes upon the wife. But his egotism is the result of some deeper cause. He feels inferior and his egotistical attitude is a defense against his own feeling of inadequacy. The roots of his inferiority feeling may extend to his earliest childhood.

People tend to "read into" a situation what they think should be there. Often they fasten upon a cause that seems logical but is actually not a cause at all, or is at best an incidental one. This



is *rationalization*. In rationalizing, a person states as the reason for his behavior something that explains it to his own satisfaction or something that is socially acceptable but may not be the actual explanation. A student fails to receive a "bid" from a fraternity that he had secretly hoped to join. He concludes that fraternities are not what they are reputed to be anyway, and that this one especially has many undesirable members. His is the "sour-grapes" type of rationalization. Another type is the "sweet-lemon" variety. A man says that he is glad he is poor because the poor do not have the responsibilities of the rich and, having fewer obligations, live more freely. A girl says that she is glad she is not attractive to boys because she wants time for study and does not want to be bothered with dates. In this type of rationalization the person makes it appear as if he enjoyed his lot and believed it most desirable for him.<sup>1</sup>

**Projection of Blame.** This is a type of rationalization. A man says that he has difficulty in getting and holding a job because the members of the union have a grudge against him. This seems to him to be the real explanation. Actually, his difficulty is due to his unreliability and poor workmanship. He does not admit this even to himself. Most human beings are prone to blame themselves last, if at all, and to project blame onto other people, circumstances, "nature," or "human nature," in self-defense. Of these, the last is an especially common target for projection. Many of the impulses and appetites that we cannot or will not control we call "human nature," and that seems to remove the blame from ourselves. What many of us overlook is that "human nature" is only partly natural and is largely of our own making.

Each person seeks to maintain what he considers a satisfactory position for himself in his own estimation, in the eyes of others, and according to what he conceives to be the expectations of others. If he does not maintain this position through his actual achievements, in self-defense he will maintain it by whatever means seems to him effective. He may compensate or over-compensate for an inferiority, project blame, identify himself with some outstanding individual, attempt escape in one way or another, rationalize, notice in others the very traits in which he

<sup>1</sup> SHAFFER, LAURANCE, "The Psychology of Adjustment." pp. 169-170, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1936.

feels himself inferior. Actually, he may not maintain the position he seeks to hold; but, if he seems to himself to do so, he is at least partly satisfied.

#### FACTORS CONDUCTIVE TO CHANGE

**Situation for Change.** Since people usually change more readily through experience than through suggestion and criticism, it is useless to tell someone that he should be different unless there is provided a situation in which he can be different or unless he himself understands the need for change and provides the situation. Let us take an imaginary example. A woman becomes irritated with her husband because of his behavior in a social group and criticizes him for it. At the same time, because she is ashamed of him in the presence of others, she refuses to go out with him. He sees no need for changing at home and cannot alter his social behavior away from home because the wife refuses to provide the situation in which change is to be made. Or a wife says, "I like to dance, but we never go to dances because my husband is such a poor dancer. He likes to dance and is willing to go. But I hate to have people see how awkward he is, and it is really no fun to dance with him." A similar thing could be true of any aspect of human relationships, including such important matters as sexual relations, the use of money, or the having of children.

**Time for Change.** It takes time for a person to change, either through his own efforts or through those of someone else. He cannot change instantly or overnight. Usually it is a mistake to hold to one's first impression of another person throughout an extended period without rechecking it to determine whether or not change has occurred. In developing new behavior patterns or new habits an individual may have temporary relapses. As time goes on, the relapses become less frequent until they finally disappear. One relapse does not necessarily indicate a permanent return to the old ways.

**Attitude of Adjustment.** An attitude of adjustment is preferable to an attitude of reform. Most persons are not readily amenable to a reform program suggested or pressed upon them by someone else. Reform carries an implication of inferiority, which is usually resented. Attempts at reform may result in rebellion.

Marriage is not a Procrustean bed. Procrustes was a character in ancient mythology whose favorite pastime was to capture unwary travelers and put them to bed. When the traveler was too short, he was stretched to fit. When the guest was too long, the obliging host cut off part of his legs. Procrustes made the serious mistake of thinking that there was only one variable in the situation, the traveler. Actually, there were three possible variables: the traveler, the bed, and his own attitude. He would have proved a more congenial host if he had adjusted the bed to the size of the occupant or if he had had an attitude flexible enough to permit some slight lack of fit between bed and guest. Instead, he set out with a rigid ideal and insisted that everyone be forced to accommodate himself to it.

In marriage the concept of adjustment is fundamental. But adjustment to what? Two personalities must adjust to each other, to the marital situation in both the narrow and the broad sense, and to social conditions in general. All these elements are continually in a state of flux. Marital adjustment is, therefore, dynamic rather than static. It does not imply one person's adjusting to another as if the other person were a fixed point and both were seeking to reach a dead level or a changeless equilibrium. Being dynamic, it implies a developing mutual relationship in which resources for satisfaction are more and more fully draw upon. Preparation for marriage is of necessity generalized. In marriage, adjustment becomes particularized through knowledge, love, discovery, effort, ingenuity, and experiment.

Adjustment does not imply that one person must do all the adjusting or that there shall always be compromise. There may be situations in which no compromise is acceptable, as, for instance, in cases of excessive alcoholism or infidelity. Even in such cases, however, a study of causes is important and readjustment may be possible.

Every problem of marriage adjustment or human relationships, with a few possible theoretical exceptions, is two-sided and occurs in a milieu, against a background of the marital and social situation. Adjustment may be achieved by one person's changing his behavior, by the other's changing his attitude, by a change in the elements that compose the situation—such as income, housing, or proximity to relatives. In a sense, we might

say that it is possible to become adjusted to a maladjustment by accepting it. This is negative adaptation.

Adjustment implies relief from tension. The only complete relief is death. All life involves tension, some of which is never completely relieved, while some may be temporarily relieved. In marriage there is always some tension because marriage involves the relationship of two persons of opposite sex. A perfect adjustment, with complete relief from tension, could be achieved only by sexless automata. Continual adjustment to tension infuses zest into marriage. When adjustment does not eventuate, that same tension may produce dissatisfaction, failure, or disaster.

That so much is said about marital adjustment does not mean that a couple are keenly and unpleasantly aware of it twenty-four hours in the day or that it comes automatically to those who have read and assimilated a few chapters in a book. When one considers that it takes about twenty years to become partially adjusted to life in general before marriage, the suggestion that a couple allow a few months or even years to adjust to each other as units in a new relationship does not seem excessive. Marriage is not a part of life; it is a way of life. Hence, marital adjustment is a widely permeating and basically essential process and worthy of fullest consideration.

**"Handling."** People resent reform, but they also tend to resent being "handled," though this is the opposite extreme. To be "handled" also implies inferiority and may make an individual feel that he has been hoodwinked. His motives, emotions, and intellectual processes have been played upon in a subtle or seemingly deceitful manner in order to gain another person's objective.

#### NEED OF A CONSTRUCTIVE AND POSITIVE POINT OF VIEW

**A Positive Point of View.** Whenever possible, it is better to be positive rather than negative—the word *positive* being used in the sense of constructive and complimentary, not in the sense of dogmatic and overconfident, and *negative* in the sense of censorious and depreciatory, not in the sense of a negative reply to a question. An ounce of appreciation, it is said, is worth a pound of criticism. Reward is more effective than punishment. Praise is more efficacious than blame. Noticing an individual's

successes is preferable to noting his failures. The old saying, "If you cannot say something good about a person, do not say anything," may be trite, but it has values as well as limitations. One need not be a Pollyanna; but certainly many unfavorable remarks result in no gain and are better left unsaid. They may be made about inconsequentials, but the remarks themselves are not inconsequential.

Criticism, censure, and blame have their place; but they should be used with discretion. It is only the relatively rare person who can accept criticism impersonally and objectively without resentment, defense, or balking. Constructive criticism is more effective than destructive criticism. When one must use the latter, he usually finds it more readily accepted if he prefaces it with something favorable. Suppose, for example, you have two things to tell a person, one favorable, the other unfavorable. If you begin with the latter, a barrier is immediately erected between the two of you. By the time you have reached the favorable comment the resentment, hurt feelings, and defenses of the other person have already become part of the situation. If, however, you begin with the favorable comment, the way is paved for the unfavorable one, and the criticism is put into a new perspective. The other person feels that you are on his side instead of against him and is more likely to accept the criticism with grace.

To make criticism effective, the other person's goals, motives, and motivations must be taken into account. If the criticism seems like a means of helping him achieve his goals, instead of a means by which his desires are frustrated, he will more readily act upon it. Suppose that a student is unpleasant to live with and frequently makes herself seem ridiculous. It is useless to tell her she is annoying people and should stop it. That starts with the effect of her behavior upon others and leaves her with no motivation for change. The actual motivation of her behavior has been to bring herself to the attention of other students because she is eager to make friends. Therefore, it is better to start with her aims. If she wants to make friends, what is the best way to do it? She sees that her way is a poor one and changes her tactics.

*Nagging* is so much more likely to be an expression of feeling on the part of the nagger than an intelligent attempt to influence

the motivations and touch upon the goals of the person nagged that it seldom accomplishes what it is presumably intended to achieve. Instead, it makes the other individual more determined to do or not to do what he is nagged about; it makes him fight back or, if he does not do this, he may seek other outlets for his emotions; it makes his emotions accumulate over a long period only to explode eventually; it makes him seek escape from the nagging situation; it leads him to give up in desperation or to be completely defeated. None of these responses can produce better human relationships or more satisfactory marriage. One cannot change the "inside" of a person by continual hammering upon the "outside."

Most people have a "world" and a "self" to defend and are fairly well satisfied with what they see in an actual or a figurative mirror. *Criticism* seems like an attack upon this "world" and "self." It seems to imply inferiority and insecurity. Consequently, it tends to be resisted and is usually not accepted unless the individual himself sees the need for change.

Some persons do improve through criticism. Others respond more readily to encouragement. Criticism makes them self-conscious. They then have difficulty in improving, especially if their efforts are witnessed by the person who did the criticizing.

Criticism is usually less effective when either person is angry. When criticism seems needed, the better course is to begin early before too much tension has accumulated and the mention of the subject becomes explosive.

**Suggestion.** Suggestions are most effective when given at the so-called "psychological moment," even if that moment has to be waited for or created. It is useless to expect a person to give his full attention and consideration to a suggestion if he is absorbed in something else. He will listen more closely if he himself has asked for the suggestions; and in many cases he may be brought to this point. Besides, the suggestions made prove to be more productive of results if they appear to come from the individual for whom they are intended.

Before making suggestions to another person, it is worth asking oneself a few questions: Is this any of my business? Have I the information and insight to be useful in this instance? What is the ultimate effect that I am working for? Am I making the suggestion to get results or to express my own feelings? Have I

taken into account the other person's attitudes, point of view, objectives?

Many persons have a grain of negativism in them, that is, they have a tendency to resist suggestion or even to do the opposite of what is proposed. If an individual manifests this trait, it must be taken into consideration in planning to get along with him.

*Advice* is a type of suggestion. Usually advice given when not sought is worse than useless. There is no more fruitless activity than the wholesale distribution of it, as if it were advertising handbills. Advice, too, is only advice. It is to be taken or not taken as the other person sees fit after weighing it against the opinions of himself and others. It is not command, as some seem to assume. The adviser has performed his function when he has given the advice. He is under no obligation to insist upon its acceptance and need not feel personally affronted if it is not acted upon.

**Inferiority Feeling.** There are individuals with inferiority feelings of such nature that the more one tries to help them and do for them, the more inferior they feel. To determine whether or not an individual is of this type requires rather delicate analysis. If he is this sort of person, it may be better to allow him to do things for you rather than continually to do things for him. Instead of putting him under obligation to you, put yourself under obligation to him. This will "build up his ego." Helping him too much may cause him to feel dominated and inferior. The effectiveness of such a procedure depends in part upon your relationship to each other and your relative status.

Most people appreciate assistance when it is openly given and if they are willing to accept it. Many resent camouflaged planning. If a person thinks his achievements have been due to his own efforts and then learns that they have been the result of someone else's planning, of which he was unaware, he will probably feel deflated and insecure.

#### IMPORTANCE OF A CONSIDERATE ATTITUDE

**Request.** In most instances, request is more effective than command. The majority of persons like to do things for others and to cooperate, but few like to be commanded or ordered about.

**Argument and Discussion.** There is no reason to suppose that oneself is always right. Other persons have as good minds, and

they think that they are right. Of necessity one or the other must be wrong in most cases, and it may be oneself. It is egotistical, to say the least, for anyone to assume that he is free to impose his point of view upon others. No one can expect to make the tail wag the dog—to have everyone else adjust ideas and behavior to his own point of view.

*Argument* seldom accomplishes anything except the release or the generation of emotion. When persons become emotionally aroused, as they usually do when they argue, they cease to think clearly. Argument is supposedly based upon reason and logic, but emotion prevents the use of these two means of reaching conclusions. Each person makes heated restatements of his point of view in the face of opposition. Such a process usually serves only to establish his point of view more firmly in his own mind. Each person publicly commits himself to a position. Thereafter to change seems like retreat and weakness.

*Discussion* tends to be more effective than argument because the proportion of facts and feelings, reason and emotion is reversed. Individuals enter an argument to convince others or impose an opinion upon them. They enter a discussion with an attitude of learning, of reaching a solution, or of discovering the truth. Therefore, in the latter, change seems like strength and progress.

Occasionally, however, argument is effective and a person may change his point of view because of it. Sometimes this occurs immediately, at other times only after what might be called an incubation period. One person states an idea which the other refuses to accept at the moment. The idea takes root and later the other person considers it his own, without knowing where he acquired it.

Anyone confronted by an argument with an individual who is emotionally aroused is faced with an almost hopeless situation. It is usually better to avoid it, unless both persons seek only the enjoyment of a verbal battle.

**Tolerance.** In dealing with people, tolerance is important. Yet, because of the implication of inferiority, no one likes merely to be tolerated. Since no one is perfect, however, we all have to make allowance for human shortcomings. If others have traits that irk us, we can rest assured that we have an equal number that irk them. Tolerance involves suspended judgment, giving



the benefit of the doubt until one has proof. It implies the avoidance of bias, prejudice, and preconceived notions. One's judgment of other persons is relative to expectations. In getting along with people one must allow for normal variation within a group. If behavior and abilities, like other things "natural," fall on the normal curve of variability, then one must expect a certain number of persons to fall short. Since judgment of other persons is relative to expectations, one should allow for possible lack of coincidence between another's aims and one's own expectations. Furthermore, every person has weak traits as well as strong ones; and many individuals have lapses even in their strongest traits.

#### RECOGNITION OF INDIVIDUAL PRIVATE WORLDS

Each individual lives in a private world of which he is the center and which is partly his own creation. True we all live on the same planet, but the earth is not our world. One's own world is one not of sensation alone but also of meaning. Sensations are the raw materials out of which experience is constructed. They are not isolated. Each new one fits into a complex pattern formed of all the individual's experience to date. Meaning depends not upon sensation but upon all experience.

We know nothing about reality. We know only our experience of it. Let us suppose that several persons are looking at a flower; they are a student in love, one not in love, a florist, a mortician, a botanist, a gardener, an artist, and an African Bushman. Do they see the same flower? They do, in the sense that the light rays passing to each person's eyes are the same for all. "Seeing the flower," however, is not a matter of sensation alone. It involves meaning; and meaning depends upon previous experience. Furthermore, all that these persons know about the flower is their experience of it. We might say that each person is like a prism through which light passes to form a spectrum. The spectrum depends not only upon the source of light and any interference with the light before it reaches the prism, but also upon the shape of the latter, the type of glass from which it is made, and the color of that glass. The individual knows nothing about the source of light. He knows only the spectrum, that is, his experience.

At best, it is possible for one person to penetrate another's world to only a slight degree. Certainly no one but the indi-

vidual himself can live in it. In a sense, we are all hermits—each partly isolated from other people. This is because only a fraction of one's experience is communicable. Communication depends upon language and other symbols. Of necessity, these are generalizations. Words are definitions determined by common agreement and based upon the assumption that, given a set of circumstances, all human beings will react the same. Therefore, words can express only that part of an individual's experience which he has in common with other people. The same is true of other symbols and his overt behavior.

When two persons "see" the "same" color—that is, when the same light rays enter the eyes of both individuals—they may use the same word to express what they "see," for example, "red." There is no way of proving that their total experience is the same. If language is analyzed far enough, eventually it is reduced to words which are indefinable and depend for their intelligibility upon the assumption that all persons have identical experience. When *A* says to *B*, "The color I see is red," *A* is in one sense communicating his experience. In another sense, *A* is stimulating *B* to recall his own. Let the reader imagine how he would explain "red" to a man born blind, and he will understand how one person can communicate with another only insofar as there are common elements in their experience. How can one fully communicate what he experiences in looking at a sunset, listening to a symphony, or being in love? After experience has been described and communicated as nearly completely as behavior and all known symbols permit, after it has been subjected to as nearly complete scientific analysis as is possible at present (and probably for some time to come), there is still an incommunicable, indescribable, unanalyzable residue, which is the individual's own and is unique.

Living in a private world gives each individual a unique *frame of reference* that makes all experience relative. Assume that you are on a train. You are in the first seat of the Pullman. As the train pulls out of the station, you leave your seat and start toward the rear. You notice that outside the window there is a pillar. As you go through the car you can see the pillar opposite you just as it was when you started. When you reach the rear platform, it is still there. Yet you have passed through the car. Have you moved? You cannot say whether

or not you have moved until you establish a frame of reference. With relation to the train you have changed your position; with relation to the pillar you have not.

Imagine that your stature were decreased by 24 inches. Your whole world would be altered, because your frame of reference would change. Other people would appear in a new light. Doorways, automobiles, houses, store windows would all seem larger. It would take longer to walk to places. From all objects light would come to your eyes from a different angle. In a crowd you would have a new perspective. You would find yourself better adapted to some sports, less well adapted to others. In some vocations you might be at a disadvantage; in others you might have an advantage over taller persons.

All this would be true as a result of a simple change in stature. One may readily understand, then, how each individual has a unique frame of reference, how each one's experience causes him to look at life through different eyes, and how all new experience is relative. No two persons have an identical total experience. No two have identical personalities. Hence, no two have the same frame of reference.

To these individual differences add sex differences. The world seems different to a woman from what it seems to a man. Vocations, clothes, other people, children, reproduction, homes, sex, all appear in different light, depending upon whether the frame of reference is masculine or feminine. It is impossible for one sex to look at life entirely through the other's eyes. Many of the experiences of one are completely foreign to the other, and there is no known method of communication. Take, for example, motherhood. There is no way whatever for a woman fully to explain to a man what it is like to be a mother. There is no way for one sex to know what the other experiences when in love. Under the most favorable circumstances in the best marriages, where there is as nearly complete understanding between husband and wife as is humanly possible, there is still an unbridgeable gulf of sex difference.

#### THOUGHTFUL JUDGMENT AND EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE

**Frankness and Tact.** Frankness is desirable, but its effectiveness is increased when it is accompanied by tact. It does not imply bluntness, brutality, debate, argument, or the necessity

for expressing everything one feels, as a child does, no matter what it is nor to whom it is said. It implies only that no unnecessary injury or damage shall be done, and that shock and pain shall be reduced. Frankness undiluted by tact is difficult for most people to accept.

**Offense.** People are often most easily offended or hurt by those closest to them in affection and esteem. They expect more from such persons and to a large extent depend upon them. Sometimes the more a personal relationship is idealized, the smaller is the pinprick necessary to deflate it or to seem temporarily to do so. We are often more thoughtless and cruel toward those who love us and to whom we are closest than to persons whose relation to us is less meaningful, because with the former there seems no need to keep up appearances and frequently they will not retaliate. Therefore, we take advantage of them.

**Motives.** Judging people by their motives as well as by their overt (outward) behavior increases understanding and eases social relationships. Worthy motives do not, of course, excuse all behavior since consequences, too, are important. If a mother disposes of her baby because she does not want it to face a life of suffering in a chaotic world, her motive may be good but that does not excuse her. The wife who neglects her appearance to save money may have commendable motives, but they are not necessarily adequate excuse.

On the other hand, understanding an individual's motives often makes for better mutual adjustment. A wife, for instance, may be critical of her husband because she is selfish and self-centered; or she may be critical because she is anxious to have her husband succeed and stand high in the esteem of his associates. In either case the criticism seems the same, but the motive is different. If the husband knows that her criticism is of the latter type, he can more readily accept it.

**Possibilities and Achievements.** People may be judged in terms of their possibilities as well as by their achievements. The direction in which a person is moving and the fact that he is moving are as important as the position he has reached. Judging by possibilities does not imply blindness to achievements or lack of them, however. It does imply broadening one's point of view and increasing one's understanding. A wife who is impatient because her young husband has not yet reached the

top in his vocation or the husband who expects his young wife to be as capable as an older woman sees only part of the total picture and overlooks possibilities.

**Dependability.** Without being like Pollyanna, we may say that most people are more dependable than we are often willing to admit. We may assume this, of course, only as long as there is no adequate reason for assuming otherwise. The path of least resistance is to judge people by their shortcomings rather than by their good qualities. We have a tendency to underrate people instead of overrating them. Underrating them makes us seem superior, and that is pleasant to ourselves. People tend to live up to the reputation established for them; and we can play a part in influencing their behavior in one direction or another, depending upon our attitude toward them.

It is possible, however, to be too optimistic and to idealize to such an extent that sight of reality is lost. This is especially true in courtship, where there is probably more idealization and often more wishful thinking than in any other period of life.

**Interference with Others.** It is better not to interfere with a person's doing of something that does not affect you in any way except that you think he is not doing it correctly or that you do not like it. If he asks for advice or you can really help him and have noticed something that he has overlooked, and if you know he would be willing to accept your suggestions, the situation is somewhat different.

**Disagreement.** If you agree with a person in little things, you may more calmly, more effectively, and more safely disagree with him in greater matters. If you regularly disagree and "lock horns" with someone over little things, you have already lost part of the battle when it comes to a more important issue, because the latter is just another matter upon which to disagree. The other person is prepared in advance for this disagreement. To take one well-known example, consider how the president of the United States must agree with innumerable men and women upon innumerable details, in order to disagree upon more important issues, win those people to his side, and promote his program. He permits many small compromises, in order to achieve a few large objectives.

**Extroversion and Introversion.** Roughly speaking, there are two general types of person, commonly termed *extrovert* and

*introvert*. The extrovert's reactions to stimuli tend more often to be muscular and to result in action. The introvert's reactions tend more often to be neural; he is more likely to be reflective, to express himself less overtly. No one is entirely extrovert or entirely introvert. Every individual is partly one, partly the other. In various persons the proportions are different. One should not expect a person who leans more toward extroversion to exhibit the same sort of behavior as one who leans more in the other direction. An extrovert wife cannot expect an introvert husband to be as effusive, as spontaneous, as talkative as she is. She must allow him privacy when he wants it, must permit him time to think, must not misinterpret his being quiet as sullenness or pouting. The husband, on the other hand, cannot expect the wife to enjoy being alone, to forego social contacts, to enjoy philosophic contemplation more than she does parties. While neither one can change readily, each can understand and take into consideration the needs of the other and make whatever compromise is necessary for mutual adjustment and satisfaction.

As we said at the beginning of this chapter, we have attempted to make some suggestions concerning the problem of getting along with people. Of necessity, our discussion has been inadequate and incomplete. There is really no way of getting along with people in general. There are only ways of getting along with individuals, to each one of which all generalizations have to be adapted.

## CHAPTER XI

### PERSONALITY ADJUSTMENT IN MARRIAGE

(Continued)

#### FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO MARITAL SUCCESS OR FAILURE

The fact that men and women are complementary does not preclude conflict between them. There are many aspects of behavior that do not fall into the category of the complementary. Both men and women have individual tastes, desires, tendencies, and goals.

**Conflict Is Normal.** Some conflict in marriage is normal and to be expected. Two personalities could not live in such intimate union without it unless one or both of them were completely apathetic and unresponsive, accepting the relationship with bovine placidity. Men and women being as they are, each with peculiar aims yet each having to take account of the existence of the other, there is a pull away from, as well as an attraction toward, each other. William Graham Sumner termed the association of the sexes *antagonistic cooperation*. There is much to be said for such a description. Conflict is not always overtly manifest; it may be covert. It does not always mean open quarreling. Nor does it necessarily mean failure. A couple need not give up their marriage as lost the first time there is conflict, tension, or a difference between them. Even the most nearly perfect marriages are much more human, more real, more earthy than fairy stories. A fairy story is perfect because it is made so; it is a static state of bliss. Like a painting of a perfect sea, it remains as it was created. Marriage is like the real sea. Far from static, it has ripples, waves, tides. The real sea is more exciting than the painted one because of its greater possibilities. Romance may be found without instituting a stagnant state of unreality.

A husband and wife need not agree upon everything or even like each other's every trait. It is not so much disagreement as the manner in which it is expressed that causes difficulty. They

should, however, agree upon basic goals; at least, they should reach a workable compromise concerning them.

In his study of the marital adjustment of 792 couples, Terman found numerous grievances mentioned by happy, as well as unhappy, spouses. The complaints were more frequent in the latter group but they were far from absent in the former. To pick a few items from Terman's results, among those most frequently mentioned by the happy husbands and wives were grievances over in-laws, choice of friends, recreations, respect for conventions; complaints that the spouse was argumentative, critical, not affectionate, nervous, a poor housekeeper, or that she nagged.<sup>1</sup> Among the unhappy couples complaints were common. Yet, when all the couples were asked what they would do about marriage if they had their lives to live over again, more than 80 per cent said that they thought they would not only marry but marry the same spouse.<sup>2</sup>

In Hamilton's study of 200 married persons some interesting attitudes were revealed. In answer to the question: What is there in your marriage that is especially unsatisfactory to you? only 39 men and 25 women said that there was nothing. To the query: What things in your married life annoy and dissatisfy you most? 23 men and 21 women said that there was nothing. Has your spouse any habits to which you object? is a question to which 45 men and 36 women answered "no" or "nothing serious." Have you any habits to which your spouse objects? brought from 33 men and 35 women the response "no" or "nothing serious." When asked what changes the individual would make in husband or wife, 21 men and 14 women said they would make no changes in any of the qualities mentioned in the inquiry. The majority of both men and women found some sources of conflict in their marriages, yet when they were asked whether they wanted to continue living with their spouses, 78 men and 75 women said "yes." When asked whether, knowing what they knew about marriage, they would remarry if they were single, 77 men and 74 women said that they would.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Terman, Lewis M., "Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness," pp. 85-88, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1938.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Hamilton, G. V., "A Research in Marriage," pp. 60-77, Albert & Charles Boni, Inc., New York, 1929.



To say that some conflict in marriage is normal does not mean that all conflict present in a given couple's marriage must inevitably remain. Conflict may be removed or ameliorated by changing the other person, by changing oneself, by altering circumstances.

**Focal Points for Conflict.** If there is tension in a marital situation, anything may become a focal point for conflict, just as crystals form on a string suspended in a saturated chemical solution or an "incident" such as the assassination of an archduke may, if the stage is set, precipitate a world war. The focal point for conflict may be relatively unimportant and may not be the true cause or even closely connected with it. As with an individual, so with a couple, the obvious cause of behavior is not always the real one. Conflict in marriage tends to become very obtrusive to the couple who experience it. If it becomes serious and permeating enough to produce failure, that failure, impending or actual, is extremely important to both husband and wife. Failure in marriage is a "big" thing. Therefore, the couple and less careful observers, oversimplifying, reason that it must have a "big" cause, and they seek for one. Among the most obvious, most tangible, possible "big" causes are children, sex, money, religion, and use of leisure time. Sometimes one of these is the true cause of conflict and failure. At other times it is only the string suspended in the tension-saturated marital solution; and the true causes are numerous subtle traits and influences not so obvious, hence less readily analyzed. Failure tends to be the result of a multiplicity of contributing factors rather than the result of a single, simple cause, no matter how important this one cause may seem.

Depending upon personalities and circumstances, the same things that serve to bind some couples closer together serve only to wedge others apart. Children, property, money, religion, sex, and numerous other factors may serve either as adhesive or as repellent, depending upon the way the couple react to them. None of these factors can produce conflict unless the couple have personality traits that permit conflict to arise. Some marriages succeed even while containing elements that contribute to the failure of others. In marital maladjustment both the couple and outside observers have to deal not only with facts but also—and perhaps this is more important—with attitudes toward facts.

Maladjustment is largely a subjective process, a result of whole personalities reacting to a total situation. The situation alone cannot produce maladjustment. An individual reacts to a spouse not as the latter is but as he is conceived to be. Observation of him may be distorted and appraisal incorrect. The attitude toward him may be unreasonable and unjustifiable. Nevertheless, this attitude becomes a real component in the conflict situation.

The *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy in thinking is often found in the analysis of marriage adjustment. In such analysis it is important to be sure that cause and effect are in the proper order. A couple have open conflict over money. Money seems to be the cause of their disharmony. But what personality traits have led them to have conflict over money? Its use may be effect as well as cause. Honeymoon experiences are frequently said to be the cause of a wife's poor sexual adjustment. Sometimes they are. In other cases, however, personality traits that made possible the reactions exhibited in the early days of marriage also play a part in producing the maladjustment. The honeymoon experiences are results as well as causes. Conflict over one thing may itself become a factor in developing personality traits which, in turn, make for other conflict.<sup>1</sup> In this way an endless chain of cause and effect springs up, and analysis becomes extremely intricate.

**What Is Successful Marriage?** Successful marriage is a dynamic, growing relationship in which the personalities of both partners continue to develop. It reaches a relatively high level of personal satisfaction. Both parties get at least what they expected from marriage. The more they get, the greater is the relative success. The couple achieve relatively full use of their personal resources and draw freely upon environmental resources to enhance their adjustment and increase their mutual happiness. There is no unusual amount of conflict overt or covert, and the marriage endures so long as both parties live. Joint enterprise and intimate relationships are not only acceptable but attractive and are carried out not only willingly but enthusiastically. The essential elements in the marriage are assimilated into the personalities of both parties; no essential element is permanently

<sup>1</sup> FOLSOM, JOSEPH KIRK, "The Family," p. 442, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1934.

encysted and shut out of the life of either partner. In such marriage each individual is permitted to approach as near his goals and objectives as his capacities will allow. There is nothing in the relationship to impede him.

*Successful* is not synonymous with *happy*, *ideal*, *satisfactory*, or *perfect*, although all except the last overlap. No marriage is perfect. Happiness is subjective and individual. A successful marriage is happy, but one may conceive of a happy marriage that is not successful because the standards of the couple are low and their relationship does not meet the criteria set up by society as well as those erected by themselves. *Ideal* marriage connotes the marriage one most desires, the nearest approach to perfection he can make, and implies that he is satisfied with his lot, knowing that human limitations forbid perfection. It also implies the standard set up by the mores as most desirable. *Satisfactory* connotes varying degrees of good enough, all of them relative to expectations and some of them so closely approximating *successful* as to be practically synonymous with it.

No criterion of success is sufficient alone. Several must be used in conjunction before any judgment upon a particular marriage may be passed. Marital success and failure are not two entities with the line between them sharply drawn. Each is a matter of degree, and they represent only the two ends of a graduated scale.

Who can judge whether a particular marriage is successful? An outside observer cannot always judge, because he is likely to set up a standard based upon his own tastes and expectations rather than upon those of the couple involved. He may also lack information about the marriage, since at best he can observe only overt behavior and for many items must depend upon the biased observation of husband or wife.

The persons in the marriage cannot always tell whether it is successful, because they have nothing to compare it with. If they try to compare their marriage with others, for the latter they fall into the category of outside observer with the limitations mentioned above. They are certain to be biased and to look at their marriage through the colored glasses of their own expectations. Both the outsider and the couple must do the best they can with the knowledge at their command, knowing that even under circumstances most favorable to observation, the final judgment is subjective.

There are really three norms of success: (1) the ideal set up by society, (2) the type of marriage that society allows to "get by," (3) the norm set up by each individual as to what he wants from marriage and expects it to be.

With these things in mind let us discuss some of the factors that may play a part in personality adjustment in marriage—factors that may contribute to success or failure as the case may be. Some have already been suggested or implied in other parts of this book. In general these factors fall into two groups: those "outside" the individual or couple, such as social conditions, and those "inside," such as personality traits. We cannot hope to discuss them all, because they vary according to time, place, circumstance, and personnel. We shall mention the first group briefly and then go on to discuss some of the things that play a part in adjustment but are of such nature that the individual himself may put them into effect in his own marriage. Some significant factors over which the individual has little or no control we shall omit from this chapter.

#### FACTORS IN THE SOCIAL SITUATION

**Doors of Escape.** The social situation is the matrix in which adjustment occurs. In a subtle manner every couple is affected by it and by the fact that morals, standards, and attitudes are in a state of transition. The social situation also offers doors of escape from unhappy marriage. It permits failure to become manifest. The possibility of escape, however, does not create the desire to escape, nor does the desire open the doors. Hence, the social situation does not cause failure except insofar as it contributes to the development of attitudes that may play a part in making marriage unsuccessful. It is the couple's reaction to the social situation that plays the greater role in causing failure.

**Legislation.** We speak of American marriage as if it were an entity, something uniform throughout the country. Actually we should speak of New York marriage, Missouri marriage, California marriage, and so on through the list, since the institution is defined by forty-eight sets of laws and is not exactly the same in any two states. This variety not only reflects a lack of standards but contributes to confusion and to the inclination to seek the most convenient legislation. If a couple want to marry and cannot conveniently do so in their own state because restrictions are irksome, they may go to another where the law is more

lenient. In some states, for example, a couple must wait five days after applying for a license before the wedding may be performed, in others three days, in others not at all. Such laws tend to be influenced by financial considerations. Instances are known in which a state became progressive and set up a waiting period. A neighboring state had no such period. Couples unwilling to wait were married in the less progressive state. This meant that fees, ring prices, and so on crossed the border, and this led the progressive state to rescind its law.

In many states there is too little or no checkup on the couple at the time they apply for a license. They may swear to false ages. They may give false addresses. Unless one of them later complains, there is no attempt to ascertain the truth. Few states require a medical examination before marriage; and in some of these few the examination is superficial or applies only to venereal infection.

In a considerable proportion of the states the law permits marriage at so early an age that the individual is not mature and preparation for marriage is impossible. In many states a girl may marry before the age at which she may leave school, get a work permit, vote, sign a valid contract, or has reached puberty. One gets a definite impression that legislators drop into any of several attitudes: (1) they consider marriage less important than other aspects of life; (2) they think that marriage requires less maturity and intelligence than voting; (3) they are afraid to tamper with the traditional arrangement; (4) they are more interested in taxes, sewers, roads; (5) they permit all marriage legislation to be colored by the requirements of the minority of cases, in which marriage is forced because of pregnancy; (6) they do not consider marriage at all. Knowing little about it and caring less, they are content to let their action be controlled by the philosophy of "what was good enough for father is good enough for me." By and large, legislators reflect public opinion. A large portion of the general public is as apathetic, as unconcerned, and as unprogressive with regard to marriage laws as are their legislators.

Marriage laws are a clear-cut illustration of cultural lag.<sup>1</sup> According to this concept, some parts of culture (civilization)

<sup>1</sup> See OGBURN, WILLIAM FIELDING, "Social Change," B. W. Huebsch, Inc., New York, 1923.

change more rapidly than others dependent upon them or associated with them. For example, control of automobile driving (drivers' tests, banked curves, uniform signals) has tended to develop more slowly than the automobile itself (fast, powerful cars). Modern social conditions are so different from those under which our marriage laws developed that new legislation is needed. But law tends to lag behind the need for change. The result is maladjustment. Our marriage laws are not adapted to the present-day social scene.

There are several summaries of laws available.<sup>1</sup> The reader is urged to examine them to see the lack of uniformity, the lack of adaptation to modern conditions, and the situation in his own community.

**Lack of Preparation for Marriage.** Society does not demand or even expect preparation for marriage. Anyone may marry provided that he seems to fulfill the meager requirements of the law. He may be scatterbrained, immature, maladjusted. He may know practically nothing about marriage or its responsibilities. He may not be able to carry a normal economic load for a person in his class. He may make an obviously poor choice of mate. He may have preparation so slight that with an equivalent amount vocationally he would be unable to hold a job in a business office or to rise even to the lower limits of mediocrity in a profession. Yet society in its slipshod way assumes toward marriage even of the most poorly prepared, the attitude, "Those whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Success in marriage is assumed to come "naturally." This attitude is reflected in the replies of 1,151 college girls who were asked whether success is something that has to be worked for, or whether it comes naturally to those in love. The latter answer was the one given by 118.

Preparation in the form of marriage education is gradually increasing in quality and extent and in the consciousness of

<sup>1</sup> See VERNIER, CHESTER, "Family Laws," Stanford University Press, Stanford University, Calif., 1931-1938; DRUMMOND, ISABEL, "Getting a Divorce," Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1931; RICHMOND, MARY E., and FRED S. HALL, "Marriage and the State," Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1929; "A Survey of the Legal Status of Women," National League of Women Voters, Washington, D. C., 1930; and HUGGINGS, FRANKLIN, "What Everyone Should Know about the Laws of Marriage and Divorce," New Century Company, New York, 1935.

certain portions of society. The process is in its infancy, however, and still has far to go before it can be said with any degree of confidence or accuracy that America prepares its youth for marriage. Anyone who, in any sort of counseling capacity, has contact with young unmarried people or with married couples knows that by the marital board goes tragedy after tragedy, many of which would have been preventable by adequate preparation.

**Obscurantism.** Until recently there has been a veil of obscurantism cast about marriage and sex. This veil has only begun to lift. Substantial remnants of it are to be observed on every hand. In one sense this obscurantism is part of society's lack of demand for preparation for marriage. In another sense it is more than simply a negative, a lack; it is a definite, positive impediment to preparation. In spite of all our supposed open discussion of sex and marriage, there is still an ample element of taboo. Sex is discussed more freely, for example, in casual conversation than it is in many schools. Innumerable families have no program of sex education, or sex education is as unplanned and uncontrolled as the development of Topsy, who "just grewed."

When the 1,151 college girls already mentioned were asked to check what they considered the best way to prepare for marriage, the replies were as follows:

1. Remain ignorant of marriage.....	46
a. Because studying marriage is apt to destroy romance.....	14
b. Because there are things no girl should know before marriage..	27
c. Because there is plenty of time after the wedding to learn what one needs to know.....	16
2. Make a thorough study of marriage relationships and problems....	991
a. By taking a course in college.....	889
b. By reading good books on the subject.....	827
c. By discussing the subject with parents.....	715
d. By discussing the subject with teachers.....	426
e. By discussing the subject with friends of your own age.....	506
3. Miscellaneous replies volunteered by the students and not suggested in the inquiry form included	
a. Discuss subject with a physician.....	23
b. Discuss subject with fiancé.....	25

The veil of obscurantism is reflected in these figures. The girls whose replies fall into the first group are not numerous; but the number is significant. One could expect at least a similar

if not larger proportion of the general population to express such an attitude when it is expressed by that number of college students. In the second group the number of girls who want preparation for marriage but would turn for help to persons other than the instructor in a special college course indicates that some of these students feel they cannot get the information they need from parents or other teachers.

There is no pillar of cloud by day or pillar of fire by night to guide the wanderers in the marital wilderness. The only adequate guide is intelligence, information, and emotional equilibrium. When society realizes that to lift the veil of obscurantism on marriage and sex does not mean to tear back the curtain that shields the intimacies of life from wanton public gaze, but rather to substitute knowledge for ignorance, planning for drifting, effort for chance, idealism for superstition, education for an agglomeration of misinformation, then preparation for marriage will be immeasurably enhanced.

**Premarital Romance.** There is an overemphasis upon premarital romance and an underemphasis upon marital success, as if the former guaranteed the latter. In movies, magazines, some books, many plays, and in the public's attitude the boy-meets-girl situation tends to take precedence over that of the happy marriage.

There is also in America a glorification of the youthful body. On billboards, in magazine advertisements, on the radio, in the motion pictures, everywhere one turns the youthful body is brought to his attention. From battleships to citrus fruit, the bathing beauty runs the entire gamut, associating her attention-getting qualities with supposedly less interesting events and objects.

Success in marriage depends upon something more than youthful beauty and the intensity of premarital romance. Whether or not the emphasis on these two things actually affects marriage is difficult to say. There are gullible people who believe everything they hear or see and who look ahead only as far as the wedding. Putting the emphasis on beauty and premarital romance gives a false impression of the factors making for long-time happiness and success.

**Low Standards of Success.** The standards that society sets up for success in marriage are comparatively low and apply



mostly to overt behavior. A man's home is his castle, even if he detests living in it. A couple may have serious conflict and may have no affection for each other. There may be no understanding, no happiness in their relationship. But if they "put up a good front," do not disturb other people, and neither complains to the court, as far as social standards are concerned their marriage tends to pass muster. Society is also wont to judge too largely in terms of stability; if a marriage lasts it must be good. One can be fairly sure that if a marriage does not last it is not successful. Many that do last are unsuccessful, too.

**Lack of Serious Attitude.** In many quarters there is a lack of serious attitude toward marriage. When student groups are asked whether they know about certain marriages, they are much more likely to express knowledge of the Gumps, Maggie and Jiggs, Dagwood and Blondie, than they are to know about the marriages of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett or the Robert Louis Stevensons. Such groups are illustrative of a common tendency, namely, that many people are more familiar with the caricature of marriage than with real instances of happy, successful married life. There are many jokes about marriage and the people involved in it. It is laughed at and held up to ridicule. Unpalatable expressions, such as "getting hooked" and "putting one's head in the noose," lightly describe marriage in terms of its worst actualities rather than of its greatest possibilities.

**Publicizing of Failure.** Marital failure is played up in the press, while marital success tends to be taken for granted. Failure is more spectacular, and apparently the public is more interested in it. Successful marriage is not news. When one sees headlines announcing the divorce of a well-known public figure, he feels as if he had learned something of importance. It is a subject to talk about. Just the thought of picking up a newspaper and reading headlines to the effect that millions of Americans are happily married seems ridiculous, so far have we taken success for granted and overstressed the significance of failure.

**Tradition.** Part of the reason for the present state in which marriage is to be found is the fact that the patriarchal family of the past no longer exists in traditional form. Yet some of the ideas and concepts with which present-day marriage is permeated

have been carried over from the marriage of yesteryear. Individuals enter marriage with a generous soaking of tradition. Some of the traditional ways no longer operate as smoothly as they did. They are not fully adapted to modern conditions. The result is conflict, transition, confusion. Here again one may observe cultural lag.

#### FACTORS IN THE INDIVIDUAL

In the discussion that follows we shall consider some of the factors that may play a part in making marriage succeed or fail. In a sense, we may be disregarding the injunction stated in an earlier chapter, namely, that in studying human behavior one should not stop with the most obvious causes. Some of the items we shall mention may be symptoms rather than causes. Our objective is to present something that may be addressed to the reader rather than written about him, something that he may, if he will, incorporate into his own attitudes and behavior. Becoming aware of certain factors may be the first step toward developing or preventing them, as the case may be. Unless there are serious underlying maladjustments, we must admit of the possibility of the individual's gradually retraining himself if he has the desire and sees the need.

**Perspective.** If you hold a penny very near one eye and shut the other, you can blot out a room full of people or the whole panorama of nature. This happens, not because the penny is more important than the people or the landscape, but because something near your eye blinds you to more important objects farther away. If you toss the penny from you, it becomes an insignificant speck in your field of vision.

During a marionette show the figures appear to grow larger as the play progresses. The reason is that when nothing is lighted except the marionette stage there is nothing with which to compare the figures. Since they act and speak like human beings, the audience reads into them human size. If at the end of the performance the operator steps onto the small stage, to the observers, comparing him with the marionettes, which in their eyes have come to seem man-size, he appears gigantic. As soon as lights are turned on, the illusion disappears.

In both these instances perspective has been lost for the time being. Things have not been seen in their correct relationships.

Perception has become distorted. In marriage, perspective may be lost and perception distorted. Something close by may blind one to something more important. One element in a situation may be fixed upon and magnified to the detriment of the whole. The individual may read into the situation what he wants or expects to see there, retiring into his own mental darkened room, in which points of reference are obliterated. Then what he "sees" is partly reality and partly his own creation. What he "sees" depends also upon circumstances and upon elements in his own personality.

If an individual fails to see the whole marital situation with its parts in their proper relationships; if he fails to discriminate between essentials and nonessentials, between those things that do and those that do not bear a relationship to the more important and basic elements in the marriage; if he cannot see the forest for the trees, he has lost his perspective. As time goes on, many couples grow to realize that what upset them at first really did not affect their marriage. Looking back in retrospect they see that their relationship has been unimpaired. If at first they had discriminated between things of lesser and things of greater significance, their initial concern would have been unnecessary.

It is common opinion that "little things" often make for failure in marriage. The term "little things" may be defined only from a specific point of view. They may be "little" to a casual observer, but not to the couple themselves. Much depends upon the relative significance assigned to them, upon perspective. When perspective is lost, "little things" may injure a marriage.

Overemphasis upon sex in marriage is a symptom of distorted perspective. Sex is not all of marriage, any more than the room in the penny experiment is all copper. A wife who permits children to draw her away from her husband has failed to distinguish between the whole and the parts. The same occurs when a man becomes too absorbed in economic activities or a woman confuses housework with homemaking.

If an individual fails to see himself in relation to the total situation and to his spouse—if, for example, personal desire, selfish whims, and hurt feelings are given precedence over the success of the marriage—he has lost perspective. If the marriage is more important than part of it, what difference does it make who takes the initiative in patching up a quarrel during which

perspective has been momentarily lost? In this latter statement, however, the implication is that after the patching up of the quarrel the couple's relationship will be a happy one and the marriage successful. It is conceivable, too, that the relationship as it is or as it would have to be reestablished would not be more valuable than the feelings of one of the parties if the latter were seriously injured. When we suggest that it makes no difference who takes the initiative in patching up a quarrel, we are referring to the ups and downs of normal marriage rather than to the steady trends of conflict which, in some cases, have already led the couple to the brink of disaster.

Failure to think of successful marriage as a goal worth striving for is a symptom of lack of perspective. Unawareness that success requires effort, intelligence, understanding, idealism and is not incidental and automatic is a symptom. Unwillingness to go more than halfway to achieve success is another. Such unwillingness results at best in a fifty-fifty marriage and indicates that the individual has put his own feelings above the whole relationship, for he will do only so much and no more to make it successful. An individual who has maintained his perspective willingly does anything within reason to make his marriage a success.

Working out a successful marriage may be compared with writing a theme. If the latter does not seem perfect after the first attempt, the writer does not tear it up and start anew with an entirely new subject, and then repeat this process again and again until a perfect finished product is achieved without revision. Rather, he chooses a topic, works and reworks it, changes words here and there, rewrites sentences and paragraphs, injects new ideas and rejects irrelevant ones until the final product is what he wants it to be and is as well done as his capacities permit.

If successful marriage is a goal worth striving for, it may be set up as a definite objective. Instead of following the path of least resistance, the couple may work toward that objective. Suppose that you are going on an automobile trip. Someone asks you where you are going and you say, "I don't know; I'll tell you when I get there." You step into your car and drive down every well-paved road, merely because it is well paved. You may arrive somewhere; you may not. That would not be your plan. First, you would decide upon a destination. Next you would work out an itinerary. Then you would take the

roads leading to your destination, even though some were rough, though the driving was sometimes hard, and you had to make some detours. You would not turn back at the first detour or stretch of poor pavement. It is sensible to lay out the best possible itinerary, but that is not the same as following the path of least resistance.

Generalizing on too few instances is an indication of lost perspective. When an individual makes *once* become *always* or *never*, he shows that he does not see the whole for the part. "You never remember a thing I tell you," says the irate wife whose husband has forgotten a single instruction. "You're always spending too much money," says the husband whose wife's latest shopping venture has been slightly expensive. The person who concludes that the almost inevitable little mistakes of the first years of marriage represent permanent maladjustments has lost perspective—or, rather, has never gained it.

**Philosophy of Life.** A philosophy of life enabling a couple to meet a crisis situation is a factor contributing to successful adjustment; its absence is a factor contributing to failure. A mature person knows that sooner or later in everyone's life crises come. Friends and relatives die. Illness occurs. Children are born. Disappointments of one sort or another impose themselves upon existence. The inability to make the best of an unchangeable situation or to tolerate it until there is time or opportunity for change may lead to poor adjustment. Someone has said, "It takes internal props to withstand external pressure." Someone else has said, "Not all the water in the seven seas can sink a ship unless that water gets inside." A philosophy of life to meet a crisis supplies those internal props and acts as the agency for keeping the water from getting inside.

In a sense, such a philosophy of life is a type of perspective—the whole of life is seen, rather than only some of its parts. When we think in terms such as these, we may think of religion as a type of perspective. So are idealism and a sense of humor. These three things—religion, idealism, and a sense of humor—do as much as any other three factors to enable the individual to see himself in the total life situation and to see the relationships between the whole and the parts.

**Adaptability.** Along with adaptability goes the spirit of adventure, a willingness to try new things. The inability or

disinclination to adjust to new circumstances plays a part in failure. A person need not be wishy-washy to be adaptable. As was said in the discussion of maturity, he should upon occasion be willing to adjust himself to the situation instead of expecting the situation always to be adjusted to him. One can maintain his individuality, integrity, and a degree of independence without setting like concrete, so that changes can be made thereafter only through the violent application of hammer and chisel. As they grow older, some persons get what might be termed "hardening of the emotional arteries." They can no more adapt to new situations than sclerotic blood vessels can accommodate themselves to increased pressure.

**Reflective Thinking.** Analyzing oneself and one's relation to the total situation is important. Relatively few persons examine themselves to determine what effect their behavior is having upon others in general or a spouse in particular. We are not implying that any one should carry this suggestion to extreme and continually worry about what others think of him. We are indicating that the proverbial bull in the china shop may have glasses fitted, so that he may see where he is going.

One aspect of reflection is objectivity. This is not synonymous with indifference, apathy, coldness, unconcern. It means rather that problems are approached and personalities appraised on the basis of careful observation and analysis of facts, uncolored by emotion, bias, or prejudice. On the other hand, however, some bias is desirable in learning to understand a husband or a wife. None of us is without it. The emotional element is essential to marital happiness, and to be completely objective would be to lack emotion.

**Cooperation.** The mention of anything so commonly assumed as the need for cooperation seems trite. In many instances cooperation is, however, more readily assumed than put into practice. To forget that in all its aspects marriage is a joint venture requiring for its successful achievement joint effort of two complementary beings is to overlook one of the minima of success.

**Material Things.** Too great dependence upon material things is sometimes a factor contributing to failure. Such things are important in their place. Property, for example, may afford a common interest, an adhesive to bind a couple together and

give a marriage stability. Such possessions alone, however, cannot make a marriage successful. Personalities and personal relationships are more important than the things attached to persons. Things may be a means to an end, but even that is not always sure. To set them up as an end in themselves is to erect an idol with feet of clay. They may also serve as symbols of relationships, as crystallized memories, so to speak, or as suggestors of experiences past, current, or future. But neither a man nor a woman can buy marital happiness with money, nor force a successful adjustment by means of an abundance of things, nor satisfactorily substitute economic goods for personal attributes. There are individuals who try it. In most cases the shallowness of their achievement reflects the paucity of their contribution.

**Fear.** Various sorts of fear, mentioned in another connection, may play a part in marital adjustment. Fear of submerging one's own personality in that of the spouse, of loss of liberty, of one's own abilities or, rather, of their lack or inadequacy may elicit reactions unfavorable to success.

Fear of losing the affection and fidelity of the other person is common. This is *jealousy*. Jealousy is a fear reaction. There are two shades of meaning for the term. If an individual has an intense desire to preserve something meaningful to him and would defend it against any attempt to destroy it but in fighting for it is always confident that he will win, he may be said to be jealous. If, on the other hand, he seeks to preserve something meaningful to him but fears that he will lose and be unable to retain it, he may be said to be jealous in the ordinary sense of the term. The first type of jealousy may be illustrated by a couple's efforts to preserve their home against the insidious attack of some vengeful relative who would destroy their happiness if he could. The second type is that exhibited by the husband who sees another man manifesting interest in his wife and she in him, and fears that he will be unable to retain her affection and fidelity against the onslaught of a seemingly more attractive person. The husband may not analyze his fear to this extent; but it is present, nevertheless. His reaction may be anger or hate, as far as he is aware of it; but at bottom it is due to insecurity.

Jealousy may be divided into two types upon another basis, namely, (1) necessary or justifiable jealousy—that based upon

observation of the behavior of the spouse; and (2) unnecessary or unjustifiable jealousy—that based not upon fact but only upon the insecurity, inferiority feeling, or suspicion of the jealous person. In the first type, the wife may know that her husband is interested in another woman and may feel helpless to hold him. In the second type, the husband has exhibited no suspicious or questionable behavior; but because the wife feels insecure, she becomes jealous when he no more than talks with a woman business associate or converses with the woman who sits next to him at a dinner.

For several reasons jealousy is self-defeating. (1) Love and fidelity cannot be forced through suspicion and surveillance. The only love worth having is that which is given freely and voluntarily. (2) The other person resents the lack of trust. (3) Even when justifiable, jealousy is not addressed to the true causes of the infidelity. Therefore, energy which might be directed to the solution of the problem and to readjustment is dissipated without gain. (4) A jealous person is likely to be hard to live with and, therefore, is likely to become unattractive. This makes the spouse lose interest and do exactly what it was feared he would do, thus furthering the end the jealousy was intended to prevent.

It is not the fact of jealousy alone, but also its expression that affects a marriage. Expression of it entails criticism, suspicion, questioning, nagging, demands for explanation, displays of temper, moodiness, loss of respect, attempted dominance, restriction of freedom, or any of a number of irritating and irksome attributes and experiences.

Jealousy, however, may have one mitigating quality that compensates in a minor way for its unpleasantness and may make the bitter pill easier to swallow. The fact that an individual manifests it may be an indication that he does not wish to lose the other person, that he wants to preserve their relationship. This thought is worth the consideration of anyone who has a jealous spouse.

If a wife feels that she is losing her husband and there is a real basis in fact for her fear, she is thrown into a dilemma to know what to do. There is no use in theorizing. The husband may be wrong. The other woman may be unscrupulous. All the wife's venomous thoughts may be justifiable. But that



will not solve the problem. No man becomes interested in another woman if his wife is more attractive to him than the other woman. The wife may force him to remain her legal spouse; but she cannot hold him as her husband except through the bonds of personal attraction. If she would retain her husband and preserve her marriage, the wife's only recourse is to compete—compete with the other woman for the affection and attention of her husband. This is the way she won him before they were married. It is the way she must hold him. This will involve studying and remedying the underlying causes of the loss of interest in herself insofar as these apply to her. Most cases of infidelity are two-sided, even though one partner alone is unfaithful. A readjustment of circumstances may be helpful. Sometimes, if it be possible and advisable, the husband may be brought into contact with a trained counselor.

**Routine.** The demands of home, family, and work inevitably produce some routine. But routine should be servant, not master. It should be a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Many educated, intelligent women become what might be called "kitchen-minded." In this state they are mentally and emotionally saturated with housework, and their outlook is bounded by the walls of their dwellings. Everything is submerged in and by housekeeping and the immediate demands of the family. This does not imply that slovenliness is a virtue and is more desirable than system. System implies efficiency; routine implies deadening repetition. Regularity has value and is not identical in connotation with routine. Figuratively speaking, romance should never be sacrificed to getting the dishes done. It is as important to budget time as money; but one need not be a "clock puncher."

Men often suffer from the masculine equivalent of "kitchen-mindedness." They become choked by ticker tapes, buried under piles of sales tickets, covered with grease, or deafened by the sound of gears.

Many husbands and wives grow to take each other for granted. Each one becomes a sort of habit to the other. "Marriage," said Balzac, "must continually vanquish a monster that devours everything: the monster of habit." Habit may destroy spontaneity. It may make husband and wife as unstimulating and as predictable as a perpetual-motion machine. Constant

rubbing in one spot may wear the garments of romance so thin that the original cloth is no longer seen because of the patches. This has given rise to the expression "marry and settle down," when the right experience should be "marry and begin to live."

Why should two complex personalities lack variety in their relationship? Monogamy and monotony are not synonymous. Seeking variety in the sense of extramarital flirtations or sexual experience indicates either failure or immaturity. Seeking variety in the sense of discovering new facets of the other spouse's personality, looking for new things that can be done together or old ones that may be revived, makes for happiness and prevents the marriage from falling into a rut of habit. It is possible to have variety in a marriage relationship, rather than a variety of mates where there is only a partially complete relationship with each one.

Romance may be kept alive in marriage by continuing to do the same things that fostered it before marriage, plus the carrying out of new ideas that occur as marriage develops, some of which may more readily be put into effect by the married than by the single.

One of the commonest results of habit is the neglect of appearance. When spouse and marriage are taken for granted, there seems no reason for remaining attractive. People sometimes forget that, although an unattractive exterior may not be the cause of losing one's spouse, it may lead to the loss of the spontaneous affection and enthusiasm of that spouse. When either party neglects his appearance, the blame is not necessarily one-sided. Suppose that a girl keeps herself very attractive before marriage, but that soon after the wedding she begins to neglect her appearance. The question is: Why does she do so? It may be because she is beginning to take marriage and husband for granted. It may be also that the husband is taking her for granted, that he fails to notice her, to compliment her, to show affection for her.

Habit is not an unadulterated evil. There are many aspects of it that may enrich marriage. It does this when a couple build their lives around common interests and when each in a sense becomes part of the other person. This may be observed in some cases of divorce, when the difficulty of breaking old

habits and the role they played in the couple's happiness at first are apparent. Habits of courtesy make any relationship smoother. The essence of courtesy is thoughtfulness of others. Hence there is a definite place for it in marriage. It is puzzling to know why so many people seem to assume that a wedding ceremony creates the privilege of being rude or thoughtless, that it is the signal for discontinuing toward husband or wife the courtesies that are exhibited toward persons who mean less in one's life.

**Domination.** The results of actual or attempted domination are relative and depend upon the personalities involved. By and large, however, domination is unhealthful. Some marriages become what might be termed "battles for prestige." The question to which the couple seek the answer is not "How may we work best together?" but "Who will give in?"<sup>1</sup>

Alfred Adler speaks of a "household run by water power." He refers to a home ruled by a wife's tears. An individual may resort to "illness" in order to dominate a spouse. A wife may become a stickler for etiquette, may use punctuality as a weapon. She may overstress her own weakness and so much admire what her husband does that he becomes burdened with expectations of further success. If the husband does not succeed, the wife blames others for having hindered him. This binds the pair more closely together and gives the wife more power over the husband. Some women marry men who are physically disabled; behind their pretence of pity and sympathy is the wish to dominate.<sup>2</sup>

One not uncommon type of attempted domination is a demand for gratitude. "If it were not for me, you wouldn't be where you are today"; "I've put up with a lot for you"; "Think what you were before I married you." When gratitude is voluntary and spontaneous, it is good for both concerned. When it is demanded, it is apt to become resentment. It throws new light upon the thing done and upon the person who makes the demand.

When the demand for gratitude takes the form of supposed martyrdom playing up sacrifices and flaunting them in the face of the other person, it becomes especially insidious. "A sacrifice

<sup>1</sup> KNOFF, OLGA, "The Art of Being a Woman," p. 196, Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., New York, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 193-195.

labeled as such is like a gift with the price tag deliberately left on; it is more of an insult than a compliment."<sup>1</sup>

The means of attempting to dominate another individual are almost as varied as individuals themselves. Usually an attempt at dominance bears an implication of inferiority or makes for a feeling of frustration. Consequently, in most cases it is resented, at least at first. Unless circumstances are unusual, it tends to undermine the mutuality of the marriage relationship.

**Overdependence.** Marriage is for mature persons; the over-dependent, parasitic, clinging-vine type of individual does not fall into that category. Considerable dependence of one spouse on the other is natural and desirable. When it reaches the point of evasion of responsibility, failure to make a contribution to the success of the marriage, inability to carry out one's half of the bargain, it is detrimental.

Overdependence may also be a symptom of immaturity, in that it may result partly from narcissism, that is, self-love. A wife, for example, may identify herself with her husband and by inference praise her wise choice of mate by continually calling attention to his virtues. She subordinates herself to him, bowing, scraping, yes-yesing, taking his slightest wish as a command. To the husband this may become boring and tiresome. If he actually believes that he is all she seems to think he is, it may affect his personality.<sup>2</sup>

What sometimes passes for overdependence may actually be domination. By submission and yielding, by manifesting an apparent need for help and guidance, by expecting another to make one's decisions and assume one's responsibilities, one person may in part control the other's behavior.

**Illness.** Illness, mental or physical, cannot always be prevented or cured. It can be understood. It is not only an illness, as such, that may affect a marriage, but also the couple's reaction to it.

**"Homeopathic Remedies."** Years ago there was a school of medical thought one of the tenets of which was this: To cure a

<sup>1</sup> WILE, IRA S., and MARY DAY WINN, "Marriage in the Modern Manner," p. 275, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1929. Reprinted with permission.

<sup>2</sup> GROVES, GLADYS H., and ROBERT A. ROSS, "The Married Woman," p. 46, Greenberg, Publisher, Inc., New York, 1936.

disease there should be administered a drug which in a healthy person would produce symptoms similar to those of the illness. For example, to cure a fever, the physician would administer a drug that would raise the patient's temperature. This was homeopathic medicine, *homeopathic* being derived from two Greek words meaning *like* and *suffering*.

In medical practice homeopathic remedies are passé, outmoded. In marriage they should be, but unfortunately are not. Such remedies in marriage take the form of retaliation in kind. An attempt is made to remedy a maladjustment by deliberately doing what the other person has done, when that proved annoying, instead of seeking and remedying the real cause of the maladjustment. There is a duplication of the undesirable behavior of the spouse. A wife is hurt by something the husband does. To remedy the injury and prevent his doing it again, she intentionally hurts him. A wife is sarcastic; the husband responds with sarcasm. Criticism is countered with criticism. One attempts to dilute his own offense or error by pointing out that the other does the same thing or something equally bad. A husband is extravagant. To cure him of his weakness for spending money and to show him the difficulties caused by an extravagant spouse, the wife becomes extravagant. This is supposed to balance the budget and also to change the husband's behavior. "Homeopathic remedies" balance neither the financial nor the marital ledger. Two minuses do not make a plus, nor two wrongs a right. Such behavior not only does not alleviate the condition toward which it is directed but has a tendency to multiply irritations, since the number of offensive stimuli as well as the sensitivity of both persons is increased. Each one reacts to the other's action plus the other's attitude.

**Tension.** Tension may be defined as a physiological, emotional, or mental state tending to give rise to activity. The activity is not necessarily directed toward removing the cause of the tension. The tension tends to be cumulative and to explode with slight stimulus, which may have little or no relation to the cause of the tension. For example, a man has been harried all day by complaining, cantankerous clients. His emotions have been frequently aroused and fatigue has gradually increased. For professional reasons he has had to maintain an appearance of patience, good nature, and self-control. At the

end of the day he goes home. One of the children does some trivial thing to disturb him and he explodes in a fit of anger. He has been geared up for violent expression and the slightest stimulus sets it off. The activity is not directed toward removing the cause of the tension, and the stimulus has little relation to the cause.

Tension may be dispersed or dissipated, so that the cumulative effect is prevented and relief is afforded. It may find outlet in sports or similar activities. It may be diverted into channels where there is no countereffect.

Every married couple and every individual needs what might be termed *tension relievers*, something equivalent in function to the chain that drags on the pavement at the back of a gasoline truck to discharge static electricity as it is generated and prevent a spark, which might cause an explosion. Often a little ingenuity, like a little oil, is all that is needed to smooth troubled water or prevent friction from wearing down a relationship. A couple may develop techniques for letting off steam as it accumulates, instead of waiting until it blows up their marriage. It is difficult to say just what these tension relievers may be for a given couple, because each case is individual. Each couple may through observation, experiment, and the exercise of imagination determine them and put them into effect.

**In-laws.** It is almost a self-evident, universally accepted truth that there are in-laws who are selfish, scheming, short-sighted, prying, interfering, demanding, or malicious. There are those who have not kept pace with the development of their children and fail to realize that the latter have grown up and become independent. There are others who are unselfish, generous, farsighted, and considerate. Some of them grow to be closer to the child-in-law than his own parents have been. There are in-laws who make a real contribution to the success of a marriage and help a couple over rough spots in their adjustment. More is said about the first type, and there is a tendency to generalize upon them.

Whenever there is an in-law problem, the young couple as well as their parents are in the midst of it. No person can have in-laws without being one. Not all the friction is precipitated by the older generation. So much has been said about in-laws, so many jokes have been made about mothers-in-law, that they

have acquired a regrettable reputation. As a result, young couples often enter marriage on the defensive, with a chip on the shoulder, so to speak, almost daring their in-laws to knock it off. If ever inadvertently or intentionally it is knocked off, the trouble begins.

When a man and a woman fall in love and marry, usually each respects the intelligence of the other. If each has been accustomed to thinking that his parents were agreeable people, there is a possibility that he is right. The other partner may, then, make that assumption until the facts prove otherwise.

If there is a bona fide in-law problem, the young couple need first of all to be certain of their perspective. The success of their marriage should be put above everything else, even above attachment to parents. Husband and wife must come first. Otherwise the individual exhibits immaturity, unless the spouse is unbearable and the marriage has hopelessly failed. The situation calls for all the tact, diplomacy, and consideration the couple can command, but it calls for firmness and intelligence, as well.

Understanding the problem faced by the couple's in-laws may help to facilitate adjustment. A family is an in-group; it exhibits cohesion. Even when the members are in conflict with each other, there is a tendency to stand united against external pressure and against members of the out-group. A child-in-law is a member of the out-group. It takes some time and requires some readjustment fully to accept him as a member of the in-group. He is considered an outsider, and there are some things that one does not do with an outsider. One does not tell him family secrets, one does not express affection for him without reserve, one does not appear in his presence in a state of dishabille.

Parents acquire their own natural child when it has no opinions to express, no prejudices, resentments, habits, tastes, or ideas of its own. The child is gradually assimilated into the family and molded by the parents to fit their pattern of life. The child-in-law is precipitated into the family, sometimes unexpectedly, sometimes against the family's will, always with ideas, tastes, habits, personality already developed.

Parents may resent the transfer of a child's affection from themselves to another person. There may be a conflict in roles, that is, in the expectations set up by parents and spouse. The parents think of the husband or wife as their child and expect a

continuation of the child role, the parent-child relationship. The spouse thinks of the person not as child but as adult, with a specific status and responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

A child is accustomed to having his parents interfere with his doings, ask questions about his plans, speak freely concerning his ideas. He accepts this from them and they in turn accept similar behavior from him. Not so with in-laws, each of whom considers the other a member of the out-group. Furthermore, older in-laws and younger ones have been reared in different eras. Their points of view may differ, and there has been neither time nor opportunity to have the corners worn smooth by constant rubbing of difference against difference, as is the case of parents and children. The mutual assimilation and adjustment of in-laws is not always easy. Anything that can serve to further the process is worth trying. What hinders the process is worth avoiding.

**Uneven Growth of a Couple.** One of the factors playing a part in marital adjustment is the uneven development of husband and wife. Perhaps at the time of the wedding their development up to date had been approximately parallel. In marriage they begin to grow at unequal rates or in different directions, or one grows while the other stagnates.

**Personal Traits.** Whatever personality traits make an individual easy or difficult to live with become factors in marital adjustment. We need not expand upon them. Marriage does create personality traits because it is a vital life experience. More surely than it creates them, however, it uncovers them, brings them to the fore, and puts them to a test. Marriage adjustment is like eating an artichoke. In day-by-day impact with reality, one after another of the petals of idealization is removed, eventually to reveal the core, the true character of each partner. It is this core of character in each with which the other spouse has to live. A wormy or shriveled core does not make a delectable addition to the marital menu. Marriage is like the developer used in photography. It does not itself produce the image on the film; it brings out the picture that was taken some time before.

**Skills.** The relative adequacy or inadequacy in any skill associated with marriage or homemaking is likely to have its

<sup>1</sup> WALLER, WILLARD, "The Family, A Dynamic Interpretation," pp. 332-333, Cordon Company, New York, 1938.



part in adjustment. This is especially true when the inadequacy of skill is accompanied by a lack of awareness of need to improve, interest in improving, or ability to improve. If a man cannot support his family, that represents the lack of a skill associated with marriage. If, besides, he does not seem to mind that he cannot support them and makes no effort to improve, the role his inadequacy plays is amplified.

What is true of skills closely associated with marriage and homemaking may also be true of skills deemed important by the spouse, even though they have no ordinary and direct bearing upon the marital situation, as such. If a husband likes to play golf and the wife not only cannot play but will not try to learn, there is both a possible source of disappointment and tension and also a lost opportunity for the wife to make a contribution to their mutual happiness.

**Outside Help.** Outside assistance may become an important factor in success or failure in marriage, because in some cases a couple exhaust their own resources and, although they have a will to succeed, do not know the next steps to take. In many cases of this kind outside help may give them the suggestion, impetus, or reorientation needed. When home remedies fail in marriage, it is good sense to turn to an expert, just as one would in case of an injury or a disease. It is better to do that than to let a marriage atrophy or die in agony.

Friends may, in rare cases, be of assistance. Usually they lack the information and knowledge required and have too biased a point of view toward the couple. A physician or a clergyman may be of assistance if he is well informed and has some insight into psychological problems and marital adjustment, and if he sees more than the physical or moral aspects, as the case may be.

In many communities there are consultation agencies where for a nominal fee one may get as nearly expert advice as is possible at the present stage of knowledge. A marriage need not be on the brink of failure before a couple visits one of these agencies. For some couples they are postgraduate educational centers, rather than clinics to treat maladjustment. They may go for budget help, advice in child rearing, information on family limitation, suggestions as to the use of leisure time, or any of a host of similar matters, having as the objective the enrichment

of marriage and family life, rather than the bare necessity of salvaging them.

One cannot, however, expect a complex adjustment problem to be solved in cliché fashion by a paragraph in a newspaper column or a snap judgment on a radio program. The newspaper advice column has a place. It is, in fact, the only agency available to large numbers of young people who are confused and need assistance. It must also be admitted that the writers of newspaper columns recognized the need for preparation for marriage and for aid to those already married before that need was recognized by many educators and members of other professions, some of whom are not yet aware of it. Whenever possible, in cases where consultation and advice are wanted, it is better to turn to a professional consultant who can give the case careful, thorough, individual consideration.

Persons of student age discussing or reading about adjustment in marriage sometimes acquire the notion that adjustment is something that obtrudes itself into a couple's consciousness during every waking moment. Adjustment in marriage is similar to that in life in general. It is a continuous never-ending process, but we are conscious of it only at intervals when changes are made, judgments drawn, or problems faced.

Students sometimes become doubtful and apprehensive when discussing marital failure. They should keep several points in mind. (1) It is easier to talk about failure than about success. (2) We know more about failure because it is more obvious, more readily defined, makes news. (3) Achievement in marriage varies from worst to best in the same way as achievement in any other human venture. There are many, many instances of success, perhaps more of success than of failure. (4) Problems are met one at a time, not all at once as one sees them in printed case studies. (5) Whatever fright one may have is lost after starting, just as stage fright is lost after a speech is begun, because then one thing at a time is concentrated upon and the individual does not look forward in more or less confused anticipation to the whole situation at once, as the unmarried young person looks forward to marriage. (6) When reading about or discussing problems of adjustment, one must realize that those are the things that happen to all couples considered as a group, not to one couple alone. No one couple faces all the problems heard

or read about. It is like reading a book on medicine; no one has all the illnesses described. (7) Normal, intelligent persons who make wise choice of mates have everything in their favor. (8) There are pitfalls and mistakes that may be avoided if recognized in advance. (9) Marriage involves problems, but it is not all problems and nothing else, any more than is life in general. Their presence in marriage is hopeful, because it shows that there are opportunities and possibilities even though they are missed by some couples. The closer to a simple economic basis marriage is, the fewer the problems of adjustment tend to be but also the fewer are the opportunities. With marriage moving away from a simple economic basis, as it has done to greater or lesser degree for the majority of couples in this country, the more numerous are the problems but the greater the potentialities. One may consider problems as challenges to richer experience and greater achievement, rather than as sources of apprehension and obstacles to happiness.

## CHAPTER XII

### PERSONALITY ADJUSTMENT IN MARRIAGE

(*Continued*)

#### SEX IN MARRIAGE

Sex is natural and normal. A sexual element is to be expected in marriage. It is this element that makes marriage different from other enduring human relationships. Sex is not the whole of marriage. It is basically important, yet it is often overemphasized.

**Sex and Personality Adjustment.** Satisfactory adjustment sexually and in other ways (if they may be separated for purposes of discussion) go hand in hand, reacting one upon the other. Where there is failure, either may be cause or effect, depending upon circumstances. If the couple's adjustment in general is unsatisfactory, there may be a sexual element at the root of the difficulty. On the other hand, unsatisfactory sexual adjustment may be the result of nonsexual factors. Success in either increases the probability of success in the other; but neither guarantees the other. Often sexual maladjustment is blamed for marital failure when it may be only one among several causes or may be the result of the factors that are working together to make the marriage fail. Under such circumstances sex becomes the hook on which the couple hang their marital wraps.

Sexual adjustment and personality adjustment are aspects of a single complex process. There is not one problem of adjusting personalities in marriage and another separate one of sex. Sex in marriage is not a simple physical act, distinct in itself. It is one component of a complicated whole, ramifying through other elements, which in their turn ramify through it, a thread of changing hue inextricably woven into the warp and woof of life.

**Nature of Sex.** As has been said before, the physical aspects of sex are extremely important, but sexual experience is more than physical. Sex in marriage contains emotional, ideal, other-

than-physical elements, which in a way are more important than the physical elements, as such. In sexual union there is not only the contact of bodily organs but also the contact of personalities. Back of these are two biographies, and back of those, the contact of two focuses of the experiences of the race—focuses, because in each individual the experiences of the race and the attitudes, ideas, conflicting opinions, varying interpretations of the present psychosocial situation are sifted out and reorganized, so to speak, to be reflected in the two personalities and all that the term *personality* implies.

Just as it is incorrect to think of sex as only physical, it is also incorrect to think of it as only psychic or platonic. The physical element can be neither avoided nor denied. It is the matrix out of which the psychic elements grow and is simultaneously one of their most potent means of expression. There is no sound reason for assuming, as some do, that the "purpose" of sexual union in human beings is only or primarily reproduction. Reproduction is often a result of coitus and for many married couples it may be a motivation. But the sexual relationship between husband and wife may play so ample a role in producing satisfaction, happiness, and personality development, and in enriching the couple's marital existence, that it goes far beyond procreation.

In animals, no doubt, the chief function of the sexual act is reproduction. Animal mating is a transitory, fleeting experience, often limited to one or more brief periods during the year. In man sexual experience is not limited either to the act itself or to a specific time. It is part of an extensive process of growth and new discovery. In its broadest sense it is one of the most fruitful sources for some of the deepest, richest satisfactions known. Assuming that sex is for reproduction alone is like assuming that, since we depend upon eyesight to move about and to make a living, seeing is for practical purposes only, and there should be created no beauty beyond the line, form, and color necessary for self-maintenance. It relegates man to the level of the animal and denies him the ability to take the raw materials of nature and out of them fashion a work of art.

We may think of the sexual urge as "instinctive," that is, as the product of inborn behavior patterns. We cannot, however, leave sexual adjustment in marriage to "instinct," because the bio-

logical urge is overlaid with tradition, habits, and attitudes, all of which make it more complex than the mating instinct of animals and, at the same time, more subject to inhibition, repression, and perversion. Instead of the sexual act's being a simple, automatic, biological reaction for which no training is necessary and which training could not improve, in its most highly developed form in man it becomes a complex type of behavior, which depends not only upon physical desire and its satisfaction but also upon ideas, ideals, the influence of custom, past experience, and the attitude of husband and wife toward each other. It is as different from the mating of animals as the building of a home is different from the construction of a nest, as the composition of a symphony is different from the automatic warbling of a bird.

#### AN UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDE TOWARD REACTIONS

**Mutuality.** In Chap. I the conclusion was drawn that, owing partly to biology and partly to training, men and women are different but complementary. It may, therefore, be assumed that they both derive satisfaction from a complementary relationship. We cannot say they derive equal satisfaction, because their experiences are incomparable. This complementariness is most nearly complete in sexual union. Hence, in such union there are potentialities for deep satisfaction for both parties. The complementariness is not complete if the union is on a physical basis only. Its potentialities cannot be realized unless there are overtones of other less tangible but equally real qualities.

Stating that sexual union is the most nearly complete complementary relationship for a man and a woman and that it contains great possibilities for satisfaction for each is obviously equivalent to saying that sexual experience is not masculine only, as is often assumed. It is mutual. Women have natural sexual desire, just as men do, although it may take a somewhat different form and be aroused by different stimuli. When a woman does not experience such desire, there are two probable explanations. (1) It has been trained out of her. It has been so overlaid with inhibitions that it cannot find expression. She has built up, or has had built up for her, a wall about herself so effectively corraling natural impulses that they have ceased to demand

exercise or have atrophied. (2) There has been nothing in her experience up to date to arouse her desire. She is, as we say, "unawakened." Some women remain so until their experiences with loving husbands bring to the fore an urge that they were not aware could exist. There are women who have a sexual urge but do not recognize it as such. Some refuse to admit what they feel. But there are relatively few women who for some basic, underlying, physiological cause are completely devoid of erotic interest. Unfortunately our cultural tradition has all too frequently taught that women should be neuter, that sex is not "ladylike," and that sexual union is a masculine prerogative for masculine satisfaction, to which a woman is bound to submit. There could be nothing further from the truth.

This is not equivalent to saying that all women have an equally ardent interest in sexual experience or an equal responsiveness to sexual stimuli. The probability is that the sexual urge, like all things natural, falls on the normal curve of variability. Some women, like some men, are more amorous, some are less so. There is the possibility for all gradations from greatest to least. At best, it is difficult to say that a woman who seems sexually cold is therefore unable to respond, even though we think in terms of inhibitions rather than physiology. All that may safely be said is that under a given set of circumstances she does not exhibit interest and seems unresponsive. Under other circumstances she might be different.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, sexual unresponsiveness is almost always the result of multiple causation. There is no one thing, no one condition, that will invariably produce it.

Let us go back for a moment to a point mentioned above. Young women are sometimes worried about their sexual adequacy. In their reading or in discussions they have learned that women experience a sexual urge, just as men do. These girls have never experienced anything that they identified as sexual desire. Often they are not averse to a controlled amount of affection and fondling on the part of boys, and they like to date. They have come to feel that they are "undersexed" or that they will be unable to respond to a husband in the way they vaguely realize that women can.

<sup>1</sup> DICKINSON, ROBERT LATOU, and LURA BEAM, "A Thousand Marriages," p. 101, The Williams & Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1932.

A girl of nineteen, for example, lets boys kiss her occasionally but has no inclination to be more intimate. She likes to date and associate with boys but prefers to go out with many different ones rather than to limit herself to one. Her girl friends have told her how boys arouse their emotions. Both boys and girls tell her she is undersexed. She has heard that a woman may experience sexual desire, but she herself has never been conscious of any such urge. As a result, she has worried about her condition until she has almost reached the conclusion that she is abnormal and unfit for marriage. Her attitude toward sex is somewhat naïve, perhaps, but on the whole it is healthy and there do not seem to be any special fears, inhibitions, or aversions. Nevertheless, she cannot conceive of herself as ever being intimate, even with a husband whom she might love. Her failure so to picture herself is due to her inability to anticipate anything that is entirely foreign to her experience and for which she has no conscious desire.

There is nothing the matter with such a girl. She is neither abnormal nor undersexed. She is unawakened. Up to date, there has been nothing in her experience to cause her to react in a way that she can identify as sexual or to feel a desire of a specifically sexual nature. She finds pleasure in being with boys and in having them kiss her. This is a broad, generalized type of sexual experience, but she does not think of it as such. There are many girls like her. They are just as normal as the girls who have more readily identifiable sexual desire or response. They need not worry about their condition. The probability is that after they fall in love and marry they will find themselves as responsive as any, allowing of course, for individual variations. When they marry, however, such girls should not insist upon maintaining their former attitude. They should permit themselves to move on to new experiences.

To say that the unawakened girl will probably be responsive in marriage is not the same as saying that the girl with strong inhibitions and feelings of repugnance, to whom sex is something to be repressed, and who is conscious of reacting against it, will become equally responsive. Such a girl should try to rethink the whole subject, should examine her past to learn if possible why she feels as she does, and should talk the matter over with some informed and understanding counselor who may help her



reach a new attitude. She may change her attitude, too, when she begins to think of sex specifically in terms of a relationship with a husband whom she loves, rather than thinking of it in a more or less general and abstract way.

Girls exhibit interest in boys and curiosity about sex just as boys show interest in girls and are curious about anatomical differences and reproduction. Sex seems natural to a child until distortions of the educative process make it appear otherwise. It is a strange side light upon our culture that some natural processes are accepted as they are with no implication of good or bad, while others equally natural are highly colored with moral or aesthetic condemnation.

Attempting to shut sex out of one's life does not raise one to a higher plane of existence, as some people suppose. It only relegates one to a more incomplete and more arid existence. In the last analysis, sex cannot be shut out. Whether it finds natural expression or not, no matter where it is put from one extreme of manifestation to the other, it will play a part in affecting the individual's life and must be taken into account. If it is repressed or avoided, it is still not without its effect. One may as well try to rule out metabolism.

**Woman's Reaction.** Even though a woman is not inhibited and has not attempted to shut sex out of her life, the arousing of her natural desire is less spontaneous than is the case with a man and depends to great extent upon her husband, his expression of affection, his own desire, his insight, understanding, and skill as her lover. This is not true of all women. As we have said, there are variations among them as to the strength of their impulses. This is more likely to be true early in a marriage than later and is certainly true in the case of the unawakened girl discussed above. Before marriage, a man may be more conscious of sexual desire and his interest tends to be more specific. Later, if the couple's adjustment is successful, the wife may be as clearly aware of her urges as the husband is of his.

Until they have had satisfactory sexual experience, women as a rule do not have a problem of control quite comparable to men's. Hence, they have a somewhat different situation to cope with before marriage. This is another argument against premarital coitus. It is true that some women do find physical satisfaction in their premarital sexual relations. Then their desire for repeti-

tion is aroused and there is created a problem of either promiscuity or control, which could have been avoided. It is better to let sleeping dogs lie. If aroused, they may strain at the leash.

Because sex is feminine as well as masculine, women as well as men reach a climax of satisfaction (orgasm) in sexual union. In men this climax comes with the ejaculation of the seminal fluid containing the sperm cells. In women there is no similar discharge. Egg cells are secreted at the rate of, roughly, one per month, irrespective of sexual intercourse. In women, none the less, there is at the climax of sexual union a combination of muscular contractions and relaxations, plus sensations of touch, which proves very pleasant and most satisfying, not physically alone but also emotionally. To describe what a man or woman actually feels under such circumstances to a person who has had no similar experience is impossible.

The intensity of this reaction in sexual union varies from individual to individual, and there may be a difference between husband and wife. It is not necessary that all persons react equally intensely. As long as the experience is agreeable to both husband and wife and both find satisfaction, peace, and happiness in it, it may be considered relatively adequate.

Some women never achieve full sexual satisfaction. This does not prove that they are unhappy in their marriages. Nor does it indicate an absence of love. A husband and wife may love each other and yet their sex adjustment may be incomplete.

Some women never achieve any satisfaction in their sexual life. Such women not only miss the pleasure and happiness that their relationship with their husbands might produce but often must endure what to them is uninteresting or repugnant. They may be psychologically virgin, although not so anatomically. They tolerate sex; they do not really experience it. Others become physically and emotionally aroused but fail to reach the climax of satisfaction that we have discussed. Instead of their finding pleasure and release, their experience ends only in nervous tension, restlessness, disappointment, or irritation.

No woman should leap to the conclusion that occasional failure will be dangerous. Either type of woman—the one who is indifferent, inhibited, repressed, unresponsive, or the one who is responsive but whose experience tends habitually to be incomplete, unsatisfying, and productive of tension rather than relief

of tension—may usually be assisted in making a more adequate adjustment if she, and perhaps her husband, consults an expert on such matters or an understanding physician. Although a woman of the first type may have no interest in improving her own adjustment, she should for the sake of her husband at least make the effort. If sexual union is the most completely complementary experience possible for a husband and wife, it is obvious that it cannot be full and rich if the wife's participation is fragmentary.

**Rights and Duties.** Sexual relations are sometimes considered a masculine right and a feminine duty. This attitude was more common in the past, but it has not yet disappeared. It is still reflected in the laws of some states, where a man may demand that his wife submit to his advances and may divorce her if she refuses. This duty-right attitude is cold, one-sided, unromantic, uninteresting, and unchallenging as compared with the attitude that sex is a mutual experience, entailing mutual satisfaction, expression of affection, trust, and desire by both parties, rather than the imposition of rights and the unwilling performance of duty.

In a sense, a right is established at the wedding, but only in the sociological and legal sense. It is better to think of the situation as presenting opportunities for both persons rather than to think of it as a trap for the woman or a bargain by which she agrees to submit to masculine demands in return for which she gains status and security. Any man who enters marriage with the intention of demanding his rights shows plainly the shallowness of his attitude toward his wife. He is more than old-fashioned; he is medieval.

**Success and Failure.** As has already been explained, the achievement of the deepest, most lasting satisfaction in sexual union is not "natural" in the sense of being "instinctive." It is an art. An art requires time, patience, thoughtfulness, perseverance, and understanding for its fullest development. Interest and urge are "instinctive," but human beings have worked out means of expression that are more than automatic and that transcend the "natural" and the physical. Sex has been raised to the plane of creative achievement.

Since this is true, a couple should not be discouraged if success is limited or absent at first. Few couples reach the greatest

possible success immediately or in the early days of marriage. The sexual relationship of husband and wife is not merely a series of isolated, unrelated incidents. It is a growing relationship, which becomes deeper and richer as time goes on. There is no reason to assume that the achievement of the first success is the end and goal and that there is nothing to look forward to or to strive for. As they grow older, the couple grow closer to each other in this as well as in other ways.

They need not be disappointed if they never reach perfection in their sexual life. Human beings never reach perfection in anything; at best, they merely approach it. They should strive for it but never actually expect to attain it. If the couple are successful a good proportion of the time, that is about all that one can with reason expect. If in rare instances a couple approach more closely to the perfect ideal, so much the better. Most couples, even though very happily married, will tend to fall short. This is not the equivalent of being content with mediocrity; but there is a real danger in setting an impossible, unattainable goal.

Even in those cases in which a couple's sexual experience does grow richer, the zest and tumultuousness of the early years of marriage may gradually change from pounding breakers to the more deeply flowing currents of later married life. No loss accrues in such a transition; there is only change. There may be gain. If, for example, as time passes a couple find that sexual union tends to become less frequent, that does not necessarily indicate that there is less interest or that their relationship is not successful. It implies only that after the first dash from the starting line they are finding their stride and that sexual union in the more specific sense is becoming part of a greatly broadened mutual experience.

In developing a new skill or new art, the novice makes many errors. In learning to walk, skate, play tennis, swim, drive a golf ball, or bid a bridge hand, we perpetrate so many mistakes that after mastering the necessary technique we look back in embarrassed retrospect on the immensity of our previous ignorance and the incredibility of our original awkwardness. We do not let our mistakes defeat us; nor do we stop with them. We overcome them. We correct them. A newly married couple are novices confronted with the problem of learning a new art and acquiring a new skill. They are almost certain to make

mistakes at first. They may feel that their ignorance is stupendous and their clumsiness colossal. They need not leap to conclusions and defeat themselves. They may learn by their mistakes. With patience, understanding, intelligence, self-analysis, an ample amount of love, and a liberal sprinkling of a sense of humor, errors may be corrected. To give up in defeat because sexual adjustment is not complete at the very beginning and because in their mutual experience there are mistakes is just as unnecessary and foolish as it would be to lie prone for the rest of one's life because one fell down the first time he tried to walk. Each successful sexual union plays a part in conditioning both husband and wife so that success in the future becomes easier. Hence, care, patience, intelligence, perspective, and a will to succeed pay large dividends in terms of long-time happiness.

In almost all cases in which there are difficulties that prevent adequate sexual adjustment, those difficulties are matters of attitude and habit rather than of anatomy. There are relatively few cases of structural defects that prevent sexual harmony, and most of these may be remedied by medical treatment. A couple who have unusual handicaps or hindrances should not conclude that these are irremediable until every resource, including expert advice, has been drawn upon.

The great majority of couples have no difficulties at all, except perhaps the normal readjustments involved in making any transition such as that from single life to the new experiences of marriage. These require only time, patience, and intelligence. We do not mean to imply that a couple should direct their attention toward nothing but possible difficulties. Quite the opposite is true. They should think of the joys of their experience together and the building of a fine relationship. Nevertheless, if there are difficulties, these should be faced frankly and objectively.

In working out a satisfactory sexual adjustment, husband and wife may help each other considerably. Each may help the other understand reactions and attitudes. The wife may explain to the husband what pleases and what displeases her. Reticence or secrecy based upon false modesty, conceit, or ignorance is one of the most effective obstacles to success.

**What a Wife Should Understand.** When she enters upon marriage and begins a new phase of her emotional life there

are several things that a woman ought to understand. First of all, she should realize that hers is not the only problem. Her husband has one, too. It is that of helping her to the best start and making her experience as rich as possible. In a sense he has her and her problem. She should help him as much as she can. She must also realize that she has married a man, not a neuter organism. He is a masculine being with strong masculine impulses. Probably, however, he has had no direct sexual experience or has had the wrong type. Most wives do not wish their husbands to have had any. He has good intentions, but he may have little finesse and may possibly lack complete understanding of her, her reactions, or the sexual relationship. Whatever generalizations he has gathered from books, discussions, friends, or advisers must be applied and adapted to specific individual circumstances. He must observe his wife's reactions and contemplate her attitudes. He could not possibly have read about her in a book. She must, therefore, give him time to learn. She cannot expect too much at first. Together they may work out an adjustment. One beauty of the experience is that it is worked out together and that it cannot be taken cut and dried from a textbook. What they finally evolve is, therefore, uniquely their own. Some men know more than others but the wife should at least give her husband the benefit of the doubt. It is not at all unknown for what would otherwise have developed into a satisfactory adjustment to be nipped in the bud because the wife was too ready to draw unwarranted conclusions.

The wife should also be aware of the fact that some men have a tendency to become angry, irritated, or impulsive when their desires have been aroused only to be frustrated, especially if the frustration is the result of what seems to the man to be an arbitrary and unreasonable denial on the part of the wife. We are not suggesting that the wife should always be submissive, but only that she should be prepared to understand.

Occasionally it happens that, because of what she has read or heard or because of her own interest and impulses, the wife expects to have her first sexual experience almost immediately after the wedding, only to find that her husband seems to lack interest. She may be not only interested but eager to consummate their relationship, to enter a new adventure together, and

to express her love for her husband. His attitude disappoints her, hurts her pride, worries her, for she wonders why he feels as he does. Fortunately, there are few cases of this sort. It is more common for the man to be more interested than the woman. If, however, a bride does find herself in such a predicament, she should not leap to conclusions until she has ascertained the real cause.

There are a number of possible explanations for the husband's apparent attitude. He may actually lack interest or his natural sexual desire may be weak or lacking. Such men are rare, however. The husband may fear sex or consider it disgusting, unclean, or sinful. Such men, too, are rare, much rarer than women who have similar attitudes. He may think that sexual relations are for reproduction only and aim to avoid them because he does not feel ready to assume the responsibility of a family. Any of these first three attitudes an observing girl could probably detect before marriage. He may be afraid of his own ability to measure up to what is expected of him as a husband. He wants their relationship to be as nearly perfect as possible and he underestimates his own adequacy. Such a man needs encouragement and trust. Criticism or hysterics will not help him. Because of the strain of a large wedding and its accompaniments, he may be fatigued. He may be shy, nervous, or embarrassed. He may be showing consideration for his wife. He knows she is tired. He feels that it is better that they become accustomed to being together at first and that their new relationship be approached gradually. This is always a possibility. The safest assumption for the wife to make is that it represents her husband's attitude unless and until she has reason to believe otherwise. Although it usually does, there is no good reason for assuming that a couple's first sexual union must occur on their wedding night, just because that is traditional. There may be sound reasons for postponing it. The tradition developed in a period when sexual experience was considered a masculine prerogative to which a passive and disinterested wife was forced by custom to submit.

**What a Husband Should Understand.** Just as there are various things that the wife should realize, so there are several of which the husband should become aware. He must understand that he has married a woman, a feminine being who will react as

a woman and not as a man. Probably she has had no experience. In some cases she scarcely knows what to expect in marriage. She may be ignorant of some of the most elementary and fundamental facts. There are educated girls who are completely ignorant of masculine anatomy and do not fully understand the anatomy and functions of their own bodily organs. Many girls do not know how men react. Many are unaware that sex is a feminine as well as a masculine experience and that women as well as men may derive satisfaction from it. If the wife has gathered any general knowledge from reading or discussion, she, too, must apply this to the individual situation. She may have good intentions and be very anxious to do the right thing and to please her husband but may not understand fully what is involved. She too must be given time to learn.

If the wife is a woman who before marriage was conscious of no desire that she identified as sexual, that desire will not be created by the wedding. Some men act as if the ceremony were all that is necessary to transmute an unawakened girl into a passionate wife. They fail to understand that this transformation depends upon the husband, not upon the ceremony.

A husband should realize further that his wife is more inclined than he to have inhibitions and fears centering around sex and its expression. Sometimes her fear is vague. At other times it is more specific, and sexual relations recall a fear situation that occurred early in her life, in the recalling of which she again experiences emotions similar to those that she felt at the time.

It is easy for a woman to let her attitude toward sexual union be influenced by her attitude toward menstruation. If she has painful periods, she may let this fact color her attitude toward sex in general. After puberty a girl is more likely to associate her genital organs with pain and with a process of which she is half ashamed and that she seeks to conceal, while a boy is more inclined to associate his with pleasureable sensation. Menstruation and sexual union, though somewhat related anatomically, are two distinct processes.

A girl may, as we have already suggested, fear pregnancy or childbirth and let this color her attitude toward sexual relations. Such a fear may be ameliorated by securing contraceptive advice from an informed physician and following that advice carefully, intelligently, and cooperatively. Dependence upon hearsay,



advice of friends, advertisement, or incomplete knowledge is definitely to be avoided. Reliable contraception may not remove a wife's fear of childbirth, because that fear probably has its roots deep in her past. But it will remove the necessity for letting the fear affect the couple's relationship, and the woman should so consider it. She may believe that sex is for reproduction only and wish to avoid it unless she feels ready to have a baby. She may fear the pain of first sexual union. Girls frequently hear greatly exaggerated accounts of the pain that a bride suffers on her wedding night or they listen to old wives' tales of one sort or another. As a result, they come to develop an entirely unnecessary and ill-founded fear. We shall consider the matter of pain later.

In order to make this discussion of inhibitions and fears more concrete, let us cite a few cases of college girls in whom one or more of these attitudes may be found. The first is a girl of nineteen. Her parents are separated and, although she sees her father occasionally, she feels that she does not really know him. Her home life is not too pleasant. Her mother is very conservative and has never told the daughter anything about sex. Recently, a sister married several months after becoming pregnant. The mother's attitude toward marriage is unhealthy and she has talked against it to the daughter. The girl has a genito-urinary disease of long standing that has necessitated frequent painful treatment. She has concluded that if sexual union involves any pain similar to that which she suffers in these treatments, she wishes to avoid it. For a long time she thought little of sex, but now has fallen in love and wishes to make her marriage successful. She is aware of the importance of sex in marriage and does not want to marry until her point of view has changed; for, because of the above influences, she has developed an attitude that is a mixture of indifference and disgust. She cannot understand why or how a couple could bring themselves to have coitus. At the same time, she is not averse to having her fiancé show affection for her.

Another girl comes for a conference because she is worried about something that she heard in a discussion with other students. Her parents are very strict and her mother has taught her that all men are beasts. In the discussion she discovered that several girls have a similar opinion and as a result they fear

marriage. She herself is afraid. All her life she has wished that she were a boy and has regretted that her freedom was restricted. She likes to date and says that she hopes some day to marry. At the same time, she says she does not like men. Menstruation is very painful for her. She has such a dread of the pain of childbirth that she herself is aware of the need for changing her attitude. She has gathered considerable misinformation about the pain of first sexual union and wonders whether a girl can be happy in marriage if she takes no interest in sex.

A girl of eighteen feels that she is in love with a boy who seems to fit her ideal. She says that as far back as she can remember she has had a fear of sex. Until she was about seventeen she had no clear idea as to what sexual intercourse is. At that time she acquired some incomplete information from a girl of her own age. Previously, she had known that babies sometimes resulted from sexual union, but she did not know why or how. She was fairly sure that kissing would not produce pregnancy, but had a vague idea about a girl's becoming pregnant if a boy came too close to her. She has never felt any specific sexual desire and cannot conceive of having sexual union with a husband. She feels that sex is for reproduction only, and she is, therefore, opposed to the use of contraceptives. She has heard something about the pain of first coitus but does not understand any reason for it. She has developed a fear of sex in marriage because she does not know what to expect and because she has heard exaggerated tales.

Attitudes such as these may make marital adjustment difficult, especially if in the early days of marriage something occurs that the girl does not understand and that seems to bring all her fears to a focus. But attitudes are acquired, and they may be changed. Back of each one there is an underlying cause, some experience or educative process out of which the attitude grew. Discovering the underlying factors and looking at them from the vantage point of greater maturity and fuller information usually leads to dispelling what otherwise might become a cloud hanging over a marriage. This is especially true if the girl herself realizes the need for change and takes the initiative in talking with someone who can help her.

If the girl marries before change occurs, the husband is presented with a real challenge to all the intelligence and under-

standing of which he is capable. If he handles the situation correctly, he may play an important role in assisting the wife to change her point of view and to move to a less inhibited, less fear-ridden level of existence. If, however, he bungles his opportunity, he may set deeper the fears that impede their adjustment.

In addition to the attitudes mentioned above, many women, and some men, have inhibitions in connection with the exposure of their own bodies or feel embarrassed at witnessing that of others. These inhibitions, too, are the result of conditioning, of training, and the latter is highly colored by convention. Convention still prohibits complete exposure of the body under many conditions. But marriage alters circumstances. What is prohibited among the unmarried is not only acceptable but often expected between husband and wife. There is no conventional restriction on their bodily exposure. If one or the other carries into the marriage relationship inhibitions having their origin in the premarital standard, that person is doing something fundamentally not different from insisting upon swimming fully clothed because a bathing suit is not appropriate apparel for a shopping trip or a formal reception.

#### SOME PROBLEMS IN ADJUSTMENT

**Fear of Pain.** A couple's first sexual union sometimes involves slight pain for the wife. The pain may be accompanied by slight bleeding. This is due to the fact that the opening of her genital tract, or more specifically the external aperture of the vagina, is partially closed by a membrane called the *hymen*. During the first act of intercourse the hymen is stretched and, in infrequent cases, torn slightly so that a few drops of blood escape. Girls often hear exaggerated accounts of this process or those based upon rare instances in which a husband is brutal or based upon the experiences of an exceptional woman whose attitudes or anatomy made sexual union inordinately difficult. As a result, they come to fear their first sexual union in marriage.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that such a fear is absolutely unfounded and unnecessary. Granting that the husband is something better than a savage, the pain, if there is any at all, will be very slight and of very brief duration. The bleeding will be inconsequential, and considerably less blood will be lost than is lost in one day's menstrual flow. In many cases

there is no pain whatever. If there is any, the woman should realize that it is the pain of transition, of growth, of moving from one stage of existence to a more mature one. It is natural pain. It might be compared with the pain of cutting teeth—not that it feels like teething, but there are similarities as to naturalness and significance. No one would deliberately enter adult life with his milk teeth or with no teeth at all, because the cutting of permanent ones is a painful process, usually more painful than the stretching of the hymen. Neither should a woman allow herself to become conditioned against sexual experience or let her first experience precipitate fears and inhibitions just because there may be slight and temporary discomfiture.

In rare instances a wife's fears react upon the muscles of her genital organs, causing them to contract so vigorously that the very pain she is afraid of is increased. She then finds herself in a vicious circle: the more she fears the experience, the greater is the pain; and the greater the pain, the more she fears it. If she can be brought to accept the experience without resistance, the cause of discomfiture will be removed. In instances still more rare some anatomical defect prevents intercourse. In either case, or we might say in any case in which there seems to be unusual difficulty, or in which the pain is experienced more than once or twice, or in which the bleeding persists, a physician should be consulted at once. Practically all such difficulties can be remedied. Even in these unusual and extreme instances there is no cause for alarm. Above all, the wife should not let the temporary inconvenience color her attitude toward the whole future of her marriage. She should be careful here, as in regard to menstrual pain, not to confuse normal elements with abnormal ones.

There is considerable variation among women as to the extent, toughness, and elasticity of the hymeneal membrane. In some girls it is so slight as to be almost nonexistent. In others it is heavy and inelastic, and the aperture is small. It has been known to return to the virginal state after having been stretched or nicked in sexual union. Consequently, the condition of the hymen is no certain, never-failing indication of the virginity or nonvirginity of a woman presumably virgin at the time of marriage. A husband who hastily concludes that his bride has had previous experience because she has neither pain nor bleeding as a result of their first sexual embrace betrays his ignorance of

anatomical variations and reflects an outworn attitude. There are enough exceptions to invalidate the rule. It is especially important to make allowance for them when marital happiness may depend upon proof or disproof of virginity.

**Premarital Medical Examination.** Partly because of the possibility of slight discomfiture experienced by some normal women in their first sexual union and partly because of the relatively remote possibility of there being some unusual anatomical condition, many girls prefer to have the hymen stretched by a physician before marriage. An examination of this membrane and the physician's recommendation as to what should be done about it may be made part of the premarital medical examination. We may go further and say that this is one of the purposes of that examination. If the physician concludes that it is advisable, the membrane may be stretched mechanically or, in some cases, cut. The pain associated with the latter process is so slight that only a local anesthetic is necessary. If this is done, the entire process becomes associated with the impersonal atmosphere of the physician's office rather than with husband and honeymoon. Some women prefer this; others do not. If it is done by a physician, however, the fiancé should be informed, so that there can be no possibility of his concluding that his bride is not virgin.

Since the chief function of the premarital medical examination is preparative rather than prohibitive, it is recommended that both man and woman have the examination. They may go to the same physician at different times or to different physicians. In either case, they should choose one who is well trained and understands the problems of normal marriage. He should be aware of the newer developments in this field of medicine and be interested in this type of problem. If the couple go to different physicians, they might do well to visit specialists, the man going to a urologist, the woman to a gynecologist. This will be a bit more expensive, but it is worth the extra investment. A girl who contemplates such an examination with embarrassment should realize that to the doctor she is a patient, not a woman. His attitude is strictly impersonal. She may simplify her problem by choosing a woman physician.

The examination should occur far enough in advance of the wedding to make it possible to carry out the physician's recommendations without excessive haste, to read what he suggests,

and to return to him for further discussion. If they choose their physician carefully, a couple may feel free to ask him about anything that they do not understand in connection with sexual adjustment and reproduction. There will probably be a number of things growing out of the examination or their reading that will not be fully clear or on which they desire further information. No matter what they may have read or gathered from other sources, it is in most cases advisable for them to talk through with the doctor the whole matter of sexual adjustment. They should not consider the matter closed until they have had answered all the questions that they feel the need for asking. In most cases one of these will pertain to contraception, and on this the doctor may make recommendations.

**The Husband's Responsibility.** Premarital examination and stretching of the hymen by the physician do not relieve the husband of his responsibility in initiating his wife into the new realm of sexual experience or the woman of the responsibility for cooperation and the development of an enlightened attitude. By the exercise of gentleness and patience, by the sacrifice of his own pleasure if necessary, the husband may carefully lay a foundation for a happy, satisfactory relationship for the future. If he is blinded by the surging impulses of the moment, he may for temporary gain pay the price of lifelong failure and incompleteness. Violence and haste, selfishness and thoughtlessness in the early days of sexual adjustment may produce psychological trauma leaving permanent scars upon a marriage and an unbridgeable hiatus in the husband-wife relationship. With their attitude toward sex and their ignorance of a woman's reactions and of what successful adjustment in marriage requires, some men are in the position of a person who is employed for a job but fails to inquire what the job involves. With pick and shovel on his shoulder, he reports for work, thinking of the contractive power of his biceps, only to find that he is to do watch making and that the requirements are patience, finesse, delicacy of operation, and lightness of touch. Fortunately, not all men—not even most—are like this. It is mentioned not to frighten the woman reader but only to make the man reader sharply aware of his role and responsibility.

There is no reason for a young husband to hurry to demonstrate his potency. No doubt his wife will eventually appreciate

masculine vigor, but she expects it to be mingled with a generous admixture of love, understanding, and consideration. Neither *masculinity* nor *virility* implies riding roughshod over a finely balanced and delicate relationship.

In the last analysis, a man has no reason to take pride in his virility. That is a gift of nature, which he has had no part in creating. He may, however, take pride in his ability to give his wife satisfaction and happiness in the broadest sense. That is an achievement of which he may well be proud, because it is an art of his own making.

As the demonstration of masculine virility is nothing for a husband to be proud of, so unnatural reserve and false modesty are nothing to which a wife may turn as a source of pride. It is no more womanly to be inhibited and emotionally undeveloped than it is manly to be bestial and inconsiderate. The best adjustment for either person is a balance between intelligent restraint and the unhampered expression of natural desires, from which the artificially imposed unnatural impediments have been removed.

**Fear of Marriage.** Unmarried girls sometimes worry about marriage, especially the sexual aspects of it, because they wonder what happens immediately after the wedding when the couple are for the first time alone as husband and wife. Only a few years ago the reader, if a college girl, would have been extremely embarrassed if a boy had kissed her. At that earlier date she could not have imagined that there would ever be a time when she would be happier in the companionship of a particular man than with anyone else, and that she would place him before even her own parents in her affection. Now during her engagement, however, not only is she unembarrassed by his caresses, but she desires them and would be disappointed if he did not express his affection for her in a tangible, physical way. The transition to the increased intimacy of marriage is equally natural. One step in that transition, the specific act of sexual union, is perhaps more clear-cut than other aspects of the process. But there will be no sudden crisis or cataclysm to shock or surprise, no experience that cannot readily be anticipated and imagined, assuming, of course, that the girl has made an intelligent choice of husband. There will be only the next natural step to something growing out of and built upon previous courtship experience, not some-

thing entirely new and different. The difference will be one of degree rather than of kind of experience.

**Differences between Men and Women.** Since men and women are different physically, one might expect to find a difference in their sexual behavior. In men the sexual impulse tends to be brought to a sharp focus within a short time and to be localized in the genital organs. In women it tends to be more diffused and generalized and involves the whole body. The genital organs are involved, but not nearly so exclusively as is the case in men. The results of this difference are several. For a woman the sexual act has a greater tendency to be part of a larger experience, in which ideal elements play an important role. This is not to say that a man's experience is limited to the physical, for his, too, may be more comprehensive. But in his reactions the physical is more clear-cut and specific. In men sexual desire is aroused by both internal and external stimuli, while in women it is more subject to external influences, although internal ones play a part. Both sexes respond to such stimuli as sight of each other, verbal expressions of affection, physical contact. Both have memory and imagination, the man having an advantage in this respect. Such factors affect a man more readily and more quickly than they affect a woman. In addition, a man is subject to a powerful internal stimulus, namely, the accumulation of seminal fluid in the reservoirs in which it is stored. If one could divide the sex urge into segments, one might say that an important part of it in a man is the desire for relief from this accumulation of fluid. There is nothing in a woman's experience quite analogous to this. She may be subject to nervous or muscular tension, but no more so than a man. Because this urge for release is foreign to a woman's experience, it is impossible for her fully to understand how a man feels when his sexual impulses have been aroused. As a couple's sexual experience together develops and grows, however, the wife becomes increasingly responsive to external stimuli and more consciously sensitive to internal ones.

Because external stimuli play so large a part in her reactions, her dependence upon her husband is only little short of complete. On the other hand, a man derives some pleasure from the emission of the seminal fluid under almost all circumstances. His sexual experience is far from complete unless it, too, has in it the other-than-physical elements; but because of the explicit nature of his



physical response, he may easily be betrayed into concluding that sexual experience is entirely physical and exclusively masculine. Furthermore, because of this accumulation of fluid, the ease with which it is evacuated, and the pleasure derived from that process, a man is less dependent upon his wife for physical satisfaction than she is upon him. As a result, unless he is enlightened, he is likely to be swept away by his own desires, forgetting her and her dependence upon him.

Women are slower to reach the climax of satisfaction in sexual union and also slower to subside afterward. A man's reactions when uncontrolled may be very quick, and his experience tends to end abruptly. Greatest satisfaction for both persons comes when this climax is reached simultaneously, or approximately so, by husband and wife. The next best thing is for the wife to reach it first. Many men seem not to be aware of this or of the wife's desire for extension of affection beyond the momentary culmination, since her reaction is more diffuse and of greater duration than his. In some cases masculine ignorance in this connection is scarcely less than appalling.

Sexual union should not take place until both persons are ready for it. This implies more than just willingness on the part of the wife. A woman needs preparation for sexual union—some women more, some less—and usually she needs more earlier in marriage than later after she has had satisfactory experience. Such preparation is not a mechanical thing. It is a direct outgrowth of frequent expression of affection and trust intensified periodically as a direct preface to a culmination in coitus. In this process, especially in its final stages, there should be no barrier, physical or otherwise, between husband and wife. Any act or expression that furthers the process is acceptable and desirable, provided that (1) it does not cause injury, pain, or disgust to either party; (2) it does not indicate or produce a fixation at a low level of adjustment; (3) it does not make either person feel guilty; (4) it does not become a permanent and regular substitute for normal sexual union—an occasional substitute may under special circumstances be acceptable; (5) it leads up to and evenuates in normal sexual relations.

No matter what one may think about sex before marriage, there is nothing more moral or more "right" than sexual union in marriage. The very impulses and desires that need to be

inhibited before the wedding need lack of inhibition afterward. It would be strange indeed if in a relationship as intimate as marriage special sensitivities containing great potentialities for mutual satisfaction had to be excluded. A man is more inclined than is a woman to be amenable to and tolerant of this sort of freedom, especially at first. Many a woman needs time to acclimate herself to a situation in which all bars are down, even though the other person is the man she loves.

**Preparation.** In preparing his wife for sexual union, much depends upon a husband's skill as a lover, his so-called and much written about *technique*. The term does not imply merely maneuvers or manipulations. It implies a thorough understanding of everything necessary to make his wife's, and incidentally his own, experience the fullest possible. Often the word is used in a too narrow sense. Frequently it is assumed that some mechanical process is all that is needed or that such a process supercedes and replaces love, affection, trust, and the other qualities that make marital relationships deep and rich. If one were to take some books on this subject at their apparent face value, one might assume that overnight any man could become a great lover and sweep any woman, whether she loved him or not, to supreme and incomparable heights of amorous experience by the mastery of some sleight of hand. Nothing could be more misleading. Maneuvers and manipulations without love, affection, and understanding are like the ability to blend colors with keen eye and nimble fingers while lacking the vision, inspiration, and insight of the true artist. Technique is important but not all-important. When a couple's relationship is successful, technique is only one of the factors to which credit is due. When it is unsuccessful, only part of the blame may be put upon this item. The sexual act to be really complete must involve meaning as well as sensation. Meaning has a permanency about it that sensation lacks, and this cannot be produced by technique.

It is true that much may be gained from reading and discussion, and some of the prerequisites for sexual harmony are readily learned. There is, however, no standard technique, no universal formula. Individual differences, attitudes, background, fears, relative intelligence, depth of affection, irritating circumstances, personality traits, understanding of anatomy, and similar items must be taken into account. A couple must work out what to

them is an acceptable relationship, not only on the basis of stock information and injunction, but also by exploration, experimentation, variation, ingenuity, and discovery. This latter process is in itself one means toward successful adjustment over a long period.

Love-play in marriage is a continuation of courtship. It should be spontaneous and should contain many of the subtleties and much of the indirectness of the latter process. For a husband always to make a direct sexual approach to his wife not only shows that he does not understand her reactions but is likely to make her avoid him, because at the time he is more fully prepared for sexual union than she. He may also defeat his purpose if he gives her the impression that every time he expresses affection for her in any way he expects sexual union inevitably to follow, or if after sexual union there is a period during which he seems disinterested and unaffectionate. She should not be made to feel that coitus is a price that she must pay for love or that it constitutes a prelude to apathy.

In this preparatory play and in sexual union a woman does not, as is sometimes supposed, have an entirely passive role. As her inhibitions fade, she should follow her impulses when she becomes aware of them. In the early days of marriage she needs most of all to abandon herself to her husband and to lose herself in this new experience with him. For some women that is more readily said than done, because all their lives they have been taught not to abandon themselves, and to make a complete rightabout-face is not easy. When a woman stands "before God and these witnesses" and takes a man as her "lawfully wedded husband," solemnly promising to love and cherish him, to forsake all others for him, to cling to him in sickness and in health, for better or for worse so long as they both live, she is placing her future in his hands and ought to be willing to go the whole way and lose herself with him in a new experience that represents the epitome of trust and devotion and the acme of mutuality.

A woman derives pleasure from yielding to the man she loves, a pleasure as remote from masculine experience and understanding as the physical aspect of a man's experience is remote from a woman's comprehension. Above all, a woman should not worry about technique, especially at first. As time goes on she will discover how she may most effectively participate. If she focuses

her attention upon details, women's reactions being diffused as they are, she puts the emphasis exactly where it does not belong. What we are saying, however, applies to specific sexual union. In the matter of responding to her husband's love-making a wife should and usually does resort to all the wiles and subtleties that she employed in courtship. There is no logical or adequate reason, biological, psychological, ethical, or otherwise, why a wife should not take an active part in a couple's love-play even so far as taking the initiative.

Sexual adjustment in marriage is not unusually difficult of achievement. Neither does it come automatically, without intelligence, effort, or understanding. Further to allay the fears of those who may feel that such an achievement is beyond the realm of possibility and quite beyond their resources, we may generalize to this extent. Except in those relatively rare instances in which unusual physical defects or uncommonly strong inhibitions or fears make successful sexual adjustment abnormally difficult, any healthy, intelligent couple may work out a satisfactory adjustment if they persevere and approach the problem sensibly, even though at first there may seem to be obstacles in their path. Some couples have no problems at all; satisfactory sexual experience comes to them as easily and naturally as their mutual love. Others have minor problems, readily solved. Very few are entirely hopeless.

**Other Considerations.** Several miscellaneous considerations bearing upon sexual adjustment may be mentioned briefly.

1. Both husband and wife should have some knowledge of the anatomy and physiological reaction of both self and the other person. If their reading has not answered all their questions, they may, as has been suggested, talk with the physician at the time of the premarital medical examination.

2. In their sexual life there should be no mechanical regularity as to time, place, or frequency. Spontaneity furthers romance; mechanism destroys it. Usually sexual union should be mutually desired before it is consummated, allowing for the difference in degree of preparation needed by husband and wife and taking into account the fact that accumulation of fluid creates a problem for the husband but not for the wife. If she understands this latter point, sexual union may be considered mutually desirable, even though the wife is not sufficiently aroused to derive much

satisfaction. Such partially one-sided union is acceptable upon occasion, provided that it does not become habitual.

Young persons often wonder about the danger of overindulgence. There is no danger of overindulgence as long as the experience is mutually desirable and as long as it is followed by a sense of well-being, repose, relaxation, calm, and oneness, rather than a sense of regret, repugnance, guilt, or excessive fatigue.

3. An attitude of leisure is important. Haste, like mechanism, kills romance and is defeating. At the time of sexual union a couple should have the attitude that for the time being this is the most important thing in life, in the broad sense. They should not consider it something to be hurried through because other things are waiting to be done.

4. Physical cleanliness has already been discussed. It will bear another reference, since it is just as important in marriage as in courtship, perhaps even more so, because physical contact becomes more intimate.

5. A young couple should be able to have privacy when they want it. Inquisitive neighbors, obtrusive relatives, a feeling of general uneasiness because of the possibility of intrusion, all make adjustment difficult. If privacy is not possible, it is in many cases advisable to change residence. It is better to have an inferior residence than an inferior relationship.

6. Fatigue often defeats adjustment. It cannot always be avoided in daily life, but the relation between fatigue and sexual adjustment may be understood and kept in mind.

**Periodicity.** Many women manifest a so-called *periodicity of sexual desire*. Both sexes exhibit variations in intensity of interest and desire, not only from individual to individual but in the same person at different times. These latter variations depend upon fatigue, other interests, bodily functions, proximity of husband and wife, frequency and recency of coitus. Superimposed upon this irregular series of changes in the individual, there is in many women a more nearly regular cyclical or rhythmic change, which bears a relation to the menstrual cycle. One might say that the man is like a lake; he exhibits waves or calm. The woman is more like an ocean; in addition to waves and calm she exhibits tides. Some women are conscious of no such periodicity. Others experience a heightened desire just before men-

struation, just after menstruation, before and after, midway between periods, or at some other time relative to the menstrual cycle. In some the periodicity is regular and recurs each month; in others it is irregular. Whether this variation in interest is physiologically, psychologically or otherwise conditioned is irrelevant here. If it exists, it is important in marriage.

G. V. Hamilton, in making a rather careful study of 100 men and an equal number of women, found that 61 of the men had observed a periodic variation in their wives' sexual interest and that 73 of the women had been conscious of such variation in themselves.<sup>1</sup> Katherine Bement Davis in a questionnaire study of some 2,200 women found that, among 1,000 who were unmarried, 272 had been aware of this periodicity of desire in themselves,<sup>2</sup> and of a similar number of married women, 171 had been conscious of it.<sup>3</sup> The discrepancy in these figures may be due, as Dr. Davis explains, to the fact that there was some difference in the questions on the two inquiry forms. Dr. Hamilton's methods of study were different from those of Dr. Davis and his group was smaller. Either of these factors may account for the difference in results of the two investigators. A large proportion of the wives studied by Terman indicated an awareness of periodicity.<sup>4</sup> Ascertaining the exact number of women who are conscious of this cyclical change in their sexual interests is not so important as recognizing that a considerable proportion of women do experience it. A given husband is confronted with the problem of understanding one wife, not with a problem in statistics.

There are only two means by which a husband may understand his wife in this particular regard: observation and information. He should observe her carefully to see whether there is any variation in her attitudes and responses during the menstrual cycle. No one can furnish him with information about his wife, however, except the wife herself. She may help her husband by carefully noting her inclinations and she need not hesitate to let her feelings become known to him. Both husband and wife

<sup>1</sup> HAMILTON, G. V., "A Research in Marriage," p. 161, Albert & Charles Boni, Inc., New York, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> DAVIS, KATHERINE BEMENT, "Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-two Hundred Women," p. 192, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1929.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>4</sup> TERMAN, LEWIS M., "Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness," pp. 350-351, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1938.

should learn how to detect and recognize each other's needs and desires, as well as feel free to make their own desires known. This may not always be done by direct statement. There are other more indirect and subtle means known to anyone who is more than completely naïve in the matter of making love.

This discussion of periodicity of desire is not meant to imply that sexual union is possible or advisable only at those relatively infrequent intervals when a woman experiences a heightened sexual interest. It does imply that at various times a different approach is necessary and that there may be varying degrees of responsiveness. There may, too, be times when a woman is not only less interested but when sexual union may be repugnant to her. At such times a husband should not expect his wife to respond to his advances.

It is interesting to note in passing that, in women who are aware of the periodicity of sexual desire, heightened interest does not always coincide with that phase of the menstrual cycle when the egg cell is released and conception is possible. This may be another bit of evidence to add weight to the argument of those who maintain that the chief function of sex is something other than reproduction. In animals reproduction is the chief function of sexual union, and in most of the mammals periods of increased desire on the part of the female and the secretion of the egg cell, and thus the possibility of conception, coincide.

**Menstrual Cycle.** For some women there is a brief period during the menstrual cycle during which they feel depressed or irritable. Dr. Hamilton found that of the 100 women 68 had periods of depression, 71 had periods of increased irritability, and others felt "physical letdown," fatigue, or nervousness.<sup>1</sup> Some women go so far as to want to hurt someone. Such feelings usually pass in a day or so. In a sense, they are uncontrollable. At least the feelings are uncontrollable; their expression may be restrained to some degree. Here again observation and information are necessary to enable the husband to understand the wife and for her to understand herself. Certainly a woman should not take undue advantage of this situation because she gets the impression that statistics justify any behavior and that she is the victim of uncontrollable forces. If a wife does experience these periods of depression or irritability, her behavior may

<sup>1</sup> HAMILTON, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141.

be more than usually unpredictable and a husband needs to understand this fact. If she feels impelled to hurt someone, the most readily available and most convenient victim is her husband. He must learn that some days each month are "off the record." They are days when nothing counts and nothing is held against the wife. If a husband is not aware of this, he may wonder why the loving wife of yesterday, for whom he cares so much and who expressed her affection so warmly, has seemed to make a rightabout-face and, without apparent provocation, cut him to the quick today. Tomorrow her mood will probably have passed. She may wonder why she felt as she did and be sorry for it; but at the time she may have enjoyed her cruelty. No husband should leap to any conclusion concerning his wife's attitude toward him until he has carefully ascertained the relation of that attitude to her menstrual cycle. No wife should conclude that her attitude toward her husband during such a period of depression or irritability is permanent or represents her "true self." A woman's "true self" is what she is over a period of about twenty-eight days, not what she is at a given moment.

**Adjustment.** We have been setting a comparatively high standard and discussing the better type of adjustment. Suppose that a girl marries a man who does not do all we have suggested, or vice versa. Either husband or wife may or may not be able to attain a high degree of success. If the individual who is not well adjusted is aware of this fact, he may see a physician or some other counselor, acquire further information, analyze himself insofar as his knowledge permits. In most instances there is little to be gained by talking the problem through with friends or other laymen. The probability is that they know no more than the individual himself and are prone to generalize on one case, which is usually their own. Above all, neither spouse should leap to the conclusion that the situation is hopeless and that the couple should separate or get a divorce.

If it is the wife who is incompletely adjusted and the husband realizes this but she does not, he may adopt any of several courses: (1) try new methods of approach or allow more time for courting her; (2) talk the problem over with her to see whether he is doing something that displeases her; (3) suggest that she seek expert help; (4) compromise, if it seems impossible for the wife's adjustment to become fully successful, as sometimes success



comes after many years of marriage—a couple should not give up easily, especially if the wife is eager to succeed or if their relationship is partly or occasionally complete; (5) examine time, place, and circumstances to determine whether there are obstacles to success to be found in the general environment; (6) suggest that there be a medical examination to determine whether there are physical defects; (7) talk the problem over with a trained counselor. If, after all these resources have been drawn upon, the adjustment seems incomplete, the couple should continue to do the best they can. Partial failure in sexual adjustment may be an explanation, but it is not an excuse for a husband's (or a wife's) extramarital promiscuity.

If it is the husband's role that is faulty or inadequate, the following suggestions may be of use to the wife. (1) She may help him to learn more about their relationship, if he is the type of man willing to learn and is amenable to suggestion. She may explain her own reactions to him. At the same time she must remember that very few men exactly fit a textbook pattern; some men express themselves in one way, some in another. (2) If the husband seems hasty and a bit rough and sexual union seems rather frequent, the wife may rest assured that in all except rare cases time will, at least in part, remedy these conditions. (3) She may consult a trained counselor about her specific problem. Generalizations are not adequate. (4) Reading may help if the couple are open-minded and willing to learn, and if there is mutual understanding. But it is often a risk when one spouse foists printed material upon the other, with an implication of the other's inferiority. (5) In the earlier part of marriage, the one great solution for many a problem is time to learn.

The best preparation for successful sexual adjustment in marriage is the development of a healthy, balanced attitude, free of unnecessary and unfounded inhibitions and fears, together with the acquisition of sound, reliable information. No matter how much the couple have read or may pride themselves upon knowing, it is still often advisable for them to talk through the whole matter of sexual adjustment with a trained counselor, so that they may think in terms of specifics rather than in terms of generalities. There is no single book that can be guaranteed to give them all the information that they need. In many ways every couple's mutual adjustment is unique.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE USE OF MONEY AND LEISURE TIME

In one brief chapter we cannot hope thoroughly to explore two aspects of marital adjustment so important as the use of income and the use of leisure time. This section purposes only to call to the reader's attention the importance of these problems. We shall make a few suggestions. But the chief objective is to make the reader aware of the need of turning to more specific and detailed sources of information and of drawing upon his own resources of experience and ingenuity in seeking for a practical, workable plan for meeting two inescapable challenges.

#### THE USE OF MONEY

Studies of marital adjustment fail to show a relationship between size of income and degree of happiness or success. In the study of 200 individuals made by Hamilton, 50 husbands whose annual income was more than \$5,000 were compared with 50 whose income was less than that amount. As to happiness in marriage, they were distributed approximately the same.<sup>1</sup> Terman found no significant correlation between income and happiness in his study of 792 couples.<sup>2</sup> Burgess and Cottrell in studying 526 couples found that adjustment seemed better when income was moderate than when it was either low or high, but they do not regard their results as conclusive.<sup>3</sup> Other observers have found similar circumstances among marriages investigated.<sup>4</sup> The general conclusion to be drawn is that, although exceedingly low income may contribute to failure, there is, by and large, no

<sup>1</sup> HAMILTON, G. V., "A Research in Marriage," p. 97, Albert & Charles Boni, Inc., New York, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> TERMAN, LEWIS M., "Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness," pp. 169-170, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1938.

<sup>3</sup> BURGESS, ERNEST W., and LEONARD S. COTTRELL, JR., "Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage," pp. 152-153, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1939.

<sup>4</sup> TERMAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-171.

significant relation between amount of income and marital success and happiness. What is important is not the quantity of money per se, but the couple's attitude toward it and the use to which it is put.

The use of money may serve as a binding factor for a couple, affording common interests and establishing common goals. It may also be a focal point for, or a cause of, conflict. One couple may find great happiness on an income identical in amount with that of another couple who are suing for divorce because of it.

Amount of income and its relation to happiness is also relative to expectations. If both husband and wife are accustomed to a modest standard of living, they may never expect or hope for a large income. If, however, their expectations run higher than their possible income, the amount of the latter may be a thorn in their flesh.

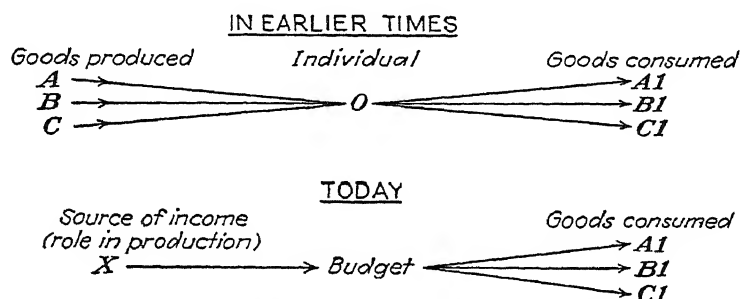


FIG. 4.— The changes in the economic aspects of marriage.

The use of money is more of a problem for the modern young couple than it was for their ancestors, because in our national economy money has come to play a larger role. There is an increased distance between production and consumption. In earlier days, for many economic goods the producer was also the consumer. This is now more likely to be true in rural districts than in cities. As the distance between producer and consumer lengthens, goods exchange hands more frequently, and this necessitates the use of a medium of exchange, namely, money. In earlier days the problem confronting a couple tended to be more how they could organize time, labor, and natural resources to produce the goods that they consumed. Nowadays, their problem is to apportion income so that they may consume the goods someone else produces. Besides, there has been built up a con-

tinuously increased variety of opportunities for consumption. At the same time, there has developed a continually more specialized function for the individual whose single source of income depends upon his taking an infinitesimal and highly specialized part in the almost infinitely subdivided scheme of production.

With indulgence for oversimplifying somewhat, this point may be illustrated by a diagram (Fig. 4).

The budget is a distributing agent. Like a dam, it holds back the undirected flow of the river in order to turn the waters into channels that supply power generators, so that electric current may be provided now here, now there, as needs arise. It should be considered as a plan for obtaining what is wanted, rather than as something negative—a restriction on spending.

**Cooperative Planning.** Formulating a budget and putting it into effect should be a cooperative undertaking in which husband, wife, and children participate. No one in the family should be put into the position of an employee who must have a requisition slip signed by his superior before he may get the supplies he needs. Each member of the family should be considered a shareholder with voting power relative to his age and experience and varying according to the decisions to be made. One way to prevent extravagance and careless use of money is to give an individual responsibility. This may be temporarily expensive, but it pays for itself in the end.

A salary check is made payable to the husband. For this reason, many men assume that they alone earn that salary. If the wife cares for the home, children, and husband; is an expert in consumption; makes social contacts that assist the husband in his profession or broaden family experience; is a companion who enriches his life, stirs his ambitions, aids him in his work, gives him something to work for, do they not earn the income jointly? The fact that a wife earns no money at homemaking does not indicate that homemaking has no monetary value. Also when one thinks in terms of purchasing power rather than a sum of money, one may readily see that a wife may, through careful spending and various phases of her own work, raise the purchasing power of each dollar that her husband earns. She need not feel that she is a parasite. She and her husband are partners in an enterprise that includes both her work and his as component parts.

Not all wives are of the type described above. Some men earn their salaries in spite of their wives, rather than with the help of the latter. Points of view must be adjusted to relationships observed. We are thinking in terms of the attitudes of the about-to-be-married. They should enter their new relationship with the idea of joint enterprise, joint earning, joint spending uppermost in their minds.

**Methods of Handling Income.** There are several possible methods of handling the actual spending. This is related to, but not identical with, the formulation of the budget. Not all ways are of equal merit. Each couple must decide for themselves which way is best adapted to their desires, abilities, and temperaments. (1) One person may handle all money. (2) One may handle all and give the other a personal allowance. (3) The husband may handle some items, the wife others. (4) The husband may handle some items, the wife others, and in addition each may have a personal allowance. (5) One may handle regular expenses, such as rent and utilities, both drawing upon a joint bank account for personal expenses. (6) They may at the beginning of each week or month, depending upon how their income is received, apportion their money for various items, paying some immediately and putting into special envelopes the sums reserved for others. For example, rent, water, light, and so on may be paid immediately; money for amusements, clothing, laundry, and similar items may be placed in marked envelopes to be used as needed. Special envelopes for this purpose may be purchased at slight expense. (7) In place of envelopes, which necessitate having money about the house, checks may be written in advance, to be cashed when necessary. If the couple has an inclination toward simple bookkeeping, a lump sum may be left in the bank but apportioned to various accounts in a small ledger. Then, as money is spent for any particular item, it is deducted from the balance in that special account in the family books. (8) Other schemes will suggest themselves to the reader who has the determination to keep finances under control and the ingenuity to make control not only effective but interesting.

**An Experimental Budget.** We suggest that the reader work out a budget to see, among other things, how many channels there are through which income ordinarily moves, how many drains there are upon it. This is usually a revelation to the

young person whose parents have taken care of most expenses, whose allowance has come with little or no effort and has been reserved for current personal expenses. In working out an experimental budget, the amount of income should be kept relatively small, unless the individual is engaged or married and the specific amount upon which the budget is to be based is already known. Approximately \$125 per month is in keeping with the average incomes of college graduates in the first few years after leaving school, while they are getting started in their professions.

In a budget for a young, childless couple the following items are possible inclusions.

Food	Toilet articles—beauty treatments
Clothing	Church and charity
Wife	
Husband	Ice
Rent	Travel—train fares, hotels, etc.
House furnishings	Fares—taxis, street cars
Additions	
Repairs	Education
Replacements	Dues to organizations
Fuel	
For heating	Automobile
For cooking	Payment on cost
	Insurance
Water	Gas and oil
	Repairs
Light	Depreciation
	License—state, city
Laundry and cleaning	Tax
Furnishings	Accessories
Clothing	Other
Medical and dental fees	Taxes
	Income—federal
Insurance	Income—state
Life—wife	Personal property—county
Life—husband	Personal property—city
Fire	Real estate
Other	Sales
	Other
Service (maid, etc.)	

Savings	Gifts
Savings account	
Investments	Debts
	Principal payments
Telephone and telegraph	Interest
Stationery and postage	Loans to others
Books, magazines, papers	Miscellaneous
	Films
Tobacco	Flowers
	Hobbies supplies
Candy and soft drinks	Pets
(unnecessary foods)	Sports equipment
	Other
Amusements	

Amounts allowed for various items will vary according to time, locality, type of residence, and individual interests and needs. Financial planning for a baby may be included if the reader so desires. Many items, such as insurance, are not paid monthly; but in an effective budget monthly allowance should be made and amounts set aside for them, so that when payment is made it represents a summation of monthly averages.

In this experimental budget the reader should reach a balance; there are to be no debts or overdrafts. There should not be too great dependence upon gifts. Already existing debts, assured wedding gifts, shower gifts already received, savings already in the bank, the purchase of furniture—all these must be considered. The reader will find it difficult to balance this budget on the income we have suggested, and many things that he has previously taken for granted in his standard of living may have to be omitted. He should face the facts. If he balances the budget with wishful thinking, he is only postponing and amplifying his inevitable impact with reality.

After you have made a budget on the basis of the income suggested, make another as you would like to see it, but keeping the income at a reasonable level. Then compare the two. The items showing the greatest discrepancy will probably be those that you will have to watch most closely in order to make your actual budget balance with the lower income.

Now that you have seen, through experiment, what it means to balance a budget, you will be more than ever interested in secur-

ing expert information and professional hints on this problem. There are many useful books and pamphlets available. Some of them are mentioned at the end of this volume.

Whatever budget you may make for experimental purposes in advance of marriage is in a sense generalized. A budget cannot be laid out in its final form in advance, except roughly. It must grow out of experience. A couple make a budget, try it for a while, then revamp it. As the second one is found not to fit here or there, another is made and so on, until experience has been sufficient to enable them to make one to which they may adhere for some time. Even then, however, it will tend to change as income changes and as new needs are met or old ones are satisfied.

There is no standard budget, no distribution of income that will automatically fit every couple's needs. Published materials help, but they alone cannot solve a couple's problem. To expect them to do so would be the same as expecting every man to wear the same sized mail-order suit. In order to make a budget work at all, a couple should list in advance probable needs and wants insofar as these are predictable, leaving a margin for the unpredictable. They should look not only weeks but months and years into the future. They should think of wants and needs not only in the economic sense, but also in the emotional and social sense.

A budget should not be considered absolutely inflexible. As unpredictable needs or opportunities arise, it should be adjusted to them. Furthermore, the couple should expect to make mistakes. The budget is a tool, a means to an end. It is not an end in itself and should not become master rather than servant. It should not be so much in evidence at all times that it becomes obtrusive and a source of irritation, thus defeating its own purpose. It can become a bone of contention, a cause of friction, a source of conflict. But so can a hand-to-mouth handling of income. Therefore, this is no argument against budgeting.

No item in the budget may be increased without decreasing some other item, assuming that income remains constant. This fact seems self-evident, but there are many who overlook it.

If income varies from month to month, as, for example, a physician's fees would, a conservative estimate should be made and the standard of living scaled to that. There is then the possibility of carrying over a surplus rather than a deficit to future months.



**Consumption.** Merely apportioning income is not enough. Purchases must take account of quality and quantity. Often the things costing least are most expensive when all factors are considered. The couple should take a long-time point of view. The budget is only the plan of attack; it is not the actual spending of money.

Both husband and wife are consumers, and modern economic conditions are putting an ever-increasing responsibility upon the consumer. This is especially true of the wife, since ordinarily most of the family purchasing falls to her. One of the modern wife's chief functions has become her role as specialist in consumption. By careful buying to lower expenses, she may raise the relative family income. As was said in another connection, some of the wife's traditional functions have been taken away from her. What can she substitute in their stead? Expert knowledge of consumption is one answer to this pertinent question. Consumer education is spreading rapidly in this country. There are many aids at her disposal. She may make a distinct contribution to family life by taking advantage of them.

**Life Income.** The couple should think in terms of life income, rather than only monthly income. For the unmarried, especially the unmarried girl, this suggests learning something about the life income to be expected in various occupations, or in that to be followed by the boy she plans to marry.

Take, for illustration, the matter of savings. A couple may feel that they can save nothing immediately after marriage because expenses are so high and income so small. As years go on and income increases, they tend to raise their standard of living and saving remains just as difficult as it was at first. Expenses tend to encroach upon resources, and the fact that they save little or nothing seems reasonable and is readily rationalized. Suppose that they think in terms of life income. It has been estimated that the average potential life income of a college graduate was, in 1925, about \$150,000; of a high school graduate, \$78,000; of an untrained person \$45,000.<sup>1</sup> These amounts have no doubt changed in recent years. The actual sums are not so important as the recognition that any couple ought to be able to save something out of amounts of those dimensions.

<sup>1</sup> See LORD, EVERETT, *The World's Work*, Vol. 49, January, 1925, pp. 240-241.

It is better to save first and spend what remains than to spend first and save what is (or is not) left. Instead of saving merely to save, that is, for saving's sake, it is better to do so for a specific purpose. Save to spend. Think in terms of postponed spending rather than purposeless hoarding.

**Insurance.** Insurance is important, but is too complex a topic to be despatched in one paragraph. There are many reliable agents who can fit a couple's insurance to their needs and in the process educate them in the intricacies of the subject. There are also numerous books on it. Probably every couple should have some insurance. None should be so overloaded with it that their budget becomes topheavy and the life blood is drained out of their income.

Insurance may be considered as protection, saving, or postponed spending, as the case may be and according to the type of policies purchased. As a couple's income grows, it is wise to increase the husband's insurance, because financial obligations will increase and the wife will accustom herself to a higher standard of living, which would make it difficult for her to drop back to a lower standard in the event of the husband's decease.

Insurance is a means invented by society to spread the burden of crisis over a large proportion of the group and over a long period for the individual. If any insurance company were faced with the necessity of paying in full and at one time all its outstanding policies, it would have to fail, for its resources would be inadequate. It is because many individuals continue to pay in, while the company pays out to relatively few, that insurance is possible. Also for the privilege of using an individual's money a little at a time, an insurance company assumes the burden of helping him or his family meet a crisis. The individual or the family can afford to pay out money in small sums, whereas the demands of an emergency could not be met. It is the part of wisdom for a couple to avail themselves of this civilized method of preserving the individual and his family from the vicissitudes of existence.

**Housing.** The question of whether to rent, buy, or build a home is one that cannot be answered dogmatically in a general discussion. Much depends upon the couple's resources, their probable financial future, the type of community in which they reside, the housing available there, comparative costs, the ques-

tion whether the husband's work may necessitate moving to another community, the availability of funds for mortgages, and interest rates. There are advantages in owning one's own home. There are also advantages in renting. The problem should be approached intelligently and cautiously. It should not be solved hurriedly or prematurely. While living for a few years in rented dwellings a couple may learn how to use their income and what they would desire in a home of their own, without hastily binding themselves to obligations that they cannot bear or to a house that does not fit their tastes and needs.

**Records.** A budget cannot be made to work effectively unless some record of expenditures is kept. Inexpensive forms for such records may be purchased. The probability is that in most cases budget and expense record will not agree exactly, because during the month some small item has been overlooked or some little error made. This should not be a source of worry. The couple should not expect to balance their accounts to the penny. If there is a fair approximation—say, within a dollar or two—that is close enough.

**Credit.** Installment buying has its good points as well as its much-discussed bad ones. It should be used with great discretion, for it can make a couple as closely and inextricably bound to the credit company as a tenant farmer is bound to his landlord. Installment buying may be like a guest who arrives bearing gifts, only to remain for years and become dependent upon the family.

It is expensive because the purchaser must pay for two things rather than one. (1) He pays for the article purchased. (2) He pays for the use of the money with which the retailer buys the article from the wholesaler. Carrying charges are interest rates. They tend to be much higher than bank interest rates. In many cases carrying charges are 12 per cent or more, while bank interest is 6 to 8 per cent. The method of figuring carrying charges differs, too. Let us suppose that you borrow \$600 from a bank at 6 per cent interest, the total to be paid back in twelve monthly amounts and the interest to be paid on the sum owed during a particular month. The first month you pay the bank \$50 plus \$3 interest, because during that month you owed \$600. The second month you pay \$50 plus \$2.75 interest, because

during the second month you owed only \$550. The twelfth month you pay \$50 plus \$0.25 interest, because the amount owed during the twelfth month was only \$50. The total interest paid for the year is \$19.50. Suppose now that you purchase a \$600 car on the installment plan. The carrying charges would, no doubt, be higher than the bank interest, but to make the comparison simple let us assume that they are 6 per cent. The interest for the year is \$36 and is computed in advance and divided into twelve equal amounts. The first month you pay \$50 plus \$3 interest. That is all right, since you owed \$600 that month. But the twelfth month you pay \$50 plus \$3 interest, although during the twelfth month you owed only \$50. You not only pay \$16.50 more interest than you did at the bank, but the interest of \$3 on the last \$50 payment is equivalent to a rate of 72 per cent per year. There are banks that make loans upon which the interest is computed in the same manner as these carrying charges, and in such cases there is little difference between borrowing and buying on installment, unless the rate itself varies.

Credit, when it is used properly, is a boon to the consumer. It is obvious, however, that cash purchasing is not only less expensive but subject to more immediate and effective control. When a couple start out on a credit basis, it is usually difficult for them to shift to a cash basis, since in any given month they must bear double expense for a given item—the payment for the past month and the reserve of cash of the month to come. Also, if one buys at stores that permit charge accounts, the probability is that he pays a carrying charge, whether or not that is stipulated. When the store management allows credit, that necessitates larger outlays of capital and more extensive bookkeeping. Someone, too, must pay for the purchases of those who fail to pay. As a result, the company that sells for cash can afford to do so at lower prices. Cash purchasing may also yield a discount. The retailer can afford to allow this because, having the cash on hand, he can purchase more goods for sale and in this way increase his turnover and, hence, his profits.

**Psychological Considerations.** Budgeting is not a financial or mathematical problem alone. It is a psychological problem,

as well—involving choices, tastes, motives, standards, self-control. It is a matter of the head as well as the pay envelope or the pocketbook, so to speak.

In one sense we budget income; we decide how it will be apportioned according to wants and needs. In another sense, we budget wants and needs, since income is fixed and these two other factors are variable. The budget is in a way like a camera shutter, which determines how much light (satisfaction of wants and needs) shall pass through the lens (budget) and affect the film (individual).

There is a difference between wants and needs. Rationalizing makes it easy to confuse them. There is also a tendency for wants to become needs as the standard of living advances. For example, for the middle- or upper-class family an automobile, formerly a luxury, has become in a sense a necessity, at least, if a given standard is to be maintained. The same is true of cosmetics, radios, college education, good music, travel.

In budgeting, one is faced with the problem of buying things versus buying "states of mind." Conspicuous expenditure tends to run rampant. There is a tendency to try to "keep up with the Joneses." "Keeping up with the Joneses" means the purchasing of things that may be seen and compared. Many individuals of grandiose exterior are rather shabby and drab internally. The reverse is often true, too. The problem confronting the young couple of limited income is where to draw the line between the purchase of things and the purchase of experiences and "states of mind."

**Adapting to a Low Standard of Living.** In most cases a girl cannot expect her young husband to maintain for her a standard of living equivalent to that of her father. Occasionally the husband can provide a higher standard. Ordinarily his standard is lower—at least, at first—no matter how adequate his education and vocational training. This is due not only to the relative size of income but also to the fact that early in marriage expenses for furniture, professional equipment, and so on tend to be high. The father has had time to take care of the overhead involved in having a home and family, while overhead must come out of the young husband's current income.

This probability of temporarily lower standard of living should not prove discouraging. Young couples who have everything

given to them miss something. They miss the exhilarating satisfaction of creating something that is their own, that they have planned for and worked for together. This planning, working, striving, sacrificing together for common ends can prove to be one of the most effective binding forces that a couple experience. Nevertheless, this is no argument for hasty, ill-prepared, premature marriage on the basis of the rationalization that the greater the struggle, the greater the benefits.

### THE USE OF LEISURE TIME

Leisure time is time that is free from economic pursuits. It is time in which the individual has greater freedom of choice as to how it shall be employed. Modern social conditions have increased the amount available to both sexes. They have also created new opportunities and new dangers.

Young couples frequently are not aware of the importance of the use of leisure or of the fact that its use may constitute a problem in marriage. An opinion often expressed by students is that, if a person has leisure, he will know what to do with it and there is no use talking about it. Experience proves that many do not know what to do with leisure time. They pass time instead of using it. They spend it instead of investing it. The expression *kill time* is indicative of a not uncommon attitude. The use of time is important in marriage because it is usually in their nonworking hours that husband and wife are most closely associated. Their leisure-time pursuits contribute, for good or ill, to the development of their personalities and their mutual relationship. Those pursuits may serve as common interests or as points of departure for conflict. They may increase tension or dissipate it. They may preserve romance or allow it to atrophy. It is not essential that all these pursuits should represent common interests. In marriage it is important that there shall be individual interests as well as those held by both partners.

Modern social conditions have not only increased the amount of leisure; they have made its use more important, since in the present-day world a great many individuals engage in occupations that play little or no part in rounding out their personalities and enriching their lives. Modern conditions have increased opportunities for the beneficial use of leisure by making it possible

cheaply and easily to multiply facilities for recreation. Automobiles are more numerous in this country than in any other nation of the world. Motion pictures and radios have made a significant contribution. With the growth of cities and the improvement of transportation, certain sports, such as baseball, have become highly commercialized.

Great as the contribution of many of these modern developments may be, they have also a debit side. They make the ordinary individual a passive rather than an active participant. The question today tends to be "Where shall we go?" rather than "What shall we do?" Radio programs, motion pictures, commercialized sports are predigested or "canned" recreation for the audience, and the latter takes them sitting down. Thrills and adventure, love and pathos, achieving success and outwitting villains are all experienced in vicarious fashion and absorbed without effort. Commercialized recreation also tends to be held to the level of greatest popular appeal, with little allowance for individuality. Along with this growth in passive participation has developed the large-scale production of facilities for active participation in certain pursuits. Photography has become a widespread hobby. Golf equipment is relatively cheap, and municipal golf courses have made this sport available to thousands. It is no longer exclusively a rich man's game. Interest groups and publications centering around collecting have added to both the quantity and the quality of this diversion.

The problem of the use of time is one of consumption. The total amount of time at anyone's disposal is limited. Only a fraction of this total is leisure. The problem becomes one of using to best advantage the limited resources at hand. The situation is in some respects similar to that which obtains with respect to natural resources, such as coal, iron, and oil. The same is true of income. If part of an individual's resources is used for one purpose, that part cannot also be used for another. Certainly this can be said of time. The individual must make choices.

In order most effectively to use time, the individual may budget it just as he budgets income. This implies not deadening regularity but intelligent distribution. A husband's schedule tends to be more rigid than a wife's because of the difference in occupational pressure. It is important that the wife budget

her time so that she and her husband will have leisure together. If she does the unpostponables first, she can readily adjust her schedule so that leisure-time pursuits may be included. If, on the other hand, she has an inclination to do postponables first, she may find that there are things she must do when her husband is free.

The married woman's problem is not one of having her work all done and then trying to find something to fill the remainder of her time. Hers is a problem of including outside interests and pursuits in a busy schedule. It is not only a problem of using leisure time but also one of creating it at the most opportune intervals.

One is tempted to be almost dogmatic concerning the married woman's use of leisure and to say that no woman can be as good a wife by devoting her entire life to housework and the demands of her family as she can if she devotes an ample portion of her time to outside pursuits. Everything she does to contribute to the development of her personality and the enrichment of her life makes an indirect contribution to the life of her home and family. The same is true of the husband. The couple's task is not only to maintain or create a dwelling. It is also to create and maintain a set of attitudes and relationships. The woman who claims to feel guilty when she takes time from her household duties for recreation does not conceive of homemaking in its broadest terms. A wife should feel guilty when she allows household duties to prevent her participating in recreational activities.

There is a difference between amusement, recreation, and re-creation. Each has its place, but they are mentioned here in the order of increasing significance. The more re-creative leisure-time pursuits are the more beneficial. Many re-creative interests are not amusing at all. Community service, for example, is a splendid leisure-time activity, but it is not classed as amusement or recreation.

It is difficult to suggest leisure-time pursuits for the individual or the couple, because the possibilities are as varied as human nature and as numerous as members of the population. Social-service agencies are fertile fields for constructive, useful activity, which will benefit both the donor and the recipient. One may collect something—anything, from paper-match covers to rare antiques. Collecting is more than merely accumulating objects.



It is a door through which one may pass to broader knowledge and wider social contacts. Pets are fascinating to some people. They range from goldfish to tame lions, and the gamut of their procurement runs from the five-and-ten-cent store to foreign expeditions. Music has almost unlimited possibilities, not only in individual participation but in family participation and community organization. Any group of persons able to read music may form an orchestra. Whether or not anyone but themselves listens to their playing is inconsequential. Reading, a reading diary, a collection of excerpts or poems may abound in interest. A handful of people may organize a community theater if they have sufficient interest and are not afraid of work.

Hobbies are almost unlimited, both in variety and in scope. Gardening may be made a year-round, as well as a seasonal, pursuit. Handwork of all sorts may be inexpensive and is fascinating. One young woman has for a period of more than three years prepared and served one new dish every day. She has sampled the recipes of the deep South, those of foreign lands, and those requiring unusual components. Not only has her hobby proved interesting, but she has added a large number of useful dishes to her repertory, pleased her friends, earned an enviable reputation, and had many an hour of fun with her husband. A woman of seventy has been writing for years. Nothing she has written has ever gone farther than the wastebasket, but writing has enabled her to express something and has enriched her life. Children draw before they write; yet few of us develop the earlier tendency.

To derive enjoyment from an activity one does not have to be an expert. Certainly one cannot expect to produce a masterpiece the first time he makes an attempt. In fact, it is not necessary or even important that he should ever produce anything outstanding. The important thing is to do something, something creative. It is not necessary to have a great amount of money to make a beginning. Ingenuity is more important than dollars. One may make a modest start.

In developing a leisure-time pursuit the individual should follow his own inclinations; he should not copy someone else's choice. He may do what someone else does also, of course; but that does not necessarily imply copying. Instead of limiting himself to the usual, let him try something out of the ordinary

if he has the inclination to do so. There is no good reason why his hobby should not be entirely unique, as long as his interest is sincere and he does not pursue it for notoriety and attention.

It is worth while to develop several hobbies, since many are seasonal or intermittent. Having several will enable one to associate with more people. Too many would lead to superficial sampling, and this is as bad as having none at all.

In every community there are untold opportunities for the use of leisure time; every individual can, if he will, find something to his liking. The first step is to make an inventory of resources both within and outside oneself, the next is to use these to best advantage. Many individuals are defeated before they begin, because they expect leisure-time interests to be furnished ready-made or to spring into being without effort, self-examination, or an attempt at discovery of resources.

## CHAPTER XIV

### REPRODUCTION

The human body is composed of untold millions of microscopic cells organized into intricate patterns and specialized to perform various functions. Roughly speaking, there are two general types: body, or *somatic*, cells and sex cells, or *gametes* (*ova* and *spermatozoa*). To attempt to establish priority of function would lead to a discussion as endless and at the same time as pointless as the attempt to answer the question: Which came first, the hen or the egg? According to one's point of view, one may say, "The egg is the hen's means of producing more hens" or, on the other hand, "The hen is the egg's means of producing more eggs." So it is with the somatic cells and gametes of the human body.

**Chromosomes and Genes.** The nucleus of each cell contains *chromosomes*, tiny bodies on which are located *genes*. The genes are determiners of hereditary traits. For each trait exhibited by the organism there are two genes or sets of genes—one received from each parent. In the somatic cells there are forty-eight chromosomes—twenty-four pairs—while in the gametes there are only twenty-four chromosomes. Thus in order to re-create the twenty-four pairs found in each body cell, two gametes must unite.

Cells increase in number through a process of division (*mitosis*), that is, each cell divides to form two cells, these two to form four, and so on. When a body cell divides, each chromosome splits lengthwise into two equal halves and one half goes to each new daughter cell. Since the chromosomes split lengthwise, the genes are also divided into halves. This process is shown schematically in Fig. 5, where the number of chromosomes is kept small to make illustration simpler.

After division each half chromosome develops into a whole one, which has the same relative genetic content (genes) as the half. Each daughter cell is, therefore, like the parent cell as far as chromosome content is concerned. Since all body cells had a

common origin in a single cell, all must have the same chromosome content.

In the formation of the gametes, however, the chromosomes, instead of splitting into halves, act as units. One whole chromosome of each pair goes to one daughter cell. The other whole chromosome goes to the other daughter cell. This process is

shown schematically in Fig. 6. The number of chromosomes in each daughter cell is reduced to half and the process is termed *reduction division* (as compared with mitosis).

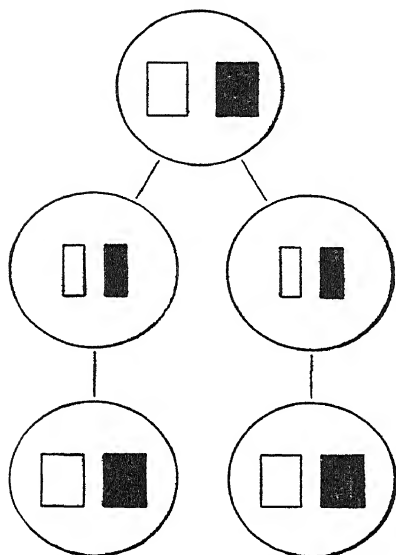


FIG. 5.—Schematic representation of mitotic cell division.

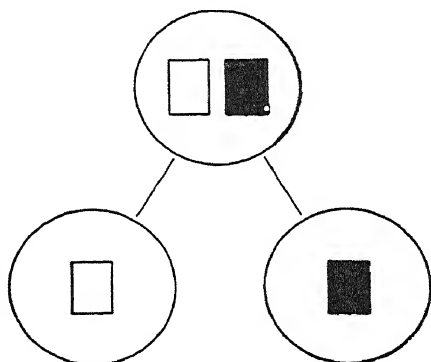


FIG. 6.—Schematic representation of reduction division.

For each trait exhibited by the organism there are at least two genes. Since the chromosomes act as units in the formation of the gametes, only one of the genes for a given trait is carried by a gamete. The chromosomes may be “shuffled” and “dealt” to the gametes as playing cards are shuffled and dealt to players. The statistical probability of two gametes having identical genetic content may be compared with the probability of a player’s receiving two identical hands after two separate shufflings and deals, assuming that on each deal he received half of the fifty-two cards. His chances would be expressed in figures of astronomical magnitude. Since this same enormous number of possible combinations of genes is found in the gametes of each parent and the number of gametes also is colossal, one may readily see why, even with all the millions of people in the world, there are no two exactly alike.

**The Gametes.** An *ovum* (plural, *ova*), or female gamete, commonly called *egg*, is globular and is about  $\frac{1}{100}$  to  $\frac{1}{200}$  inch in diameter, that is, considerably smaller than the period at the end of this sentence. It is just visible to the naked eye. A thimble could hold 3 million ova. All the ova needed to produce the population of the world—2 billion—could be contained in a derby hat.<sup>1</sup> At that, ova are the largest single cells in the body and are many times larger than spermatozoa. In an egg such as a hen's, the ovum itself constitutes only an infinitesimal fraction of the whole; the rest is food material for the developing embryo. There is no correlation between the size of the ovum and body size. The ova of rabbits, whales, dogs, gorillas, pigs, and mice, for example, all have approximately the same dimensions.<sup>2</sup>

*Sperms* (spermatozoa), or male gametes, are extremely minute and are shaped, roughly, like tadpoles. There is an oval head approximately  $\frac{1}{5000}$  inch long, a middle piece, and a comparatively long tail, making the total length about  $\frac{1}{500}$  inch. The 2 billion sperms needed to produce the population of the world could be accommodated in a container the size of a capital letter O.<sup>3</sup>

Ova are immobile, that is, they cannot move by their own power. Sperms, however, propel themselves by lashing their tails in much the same way as a tadpole swims. Relative to their size, they get about fairly well, moving approximately 3.6 millimeters (about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch) per minute,<sup>4</sup> or an inch in seven minutes. Since each sperm is about  $\frac{1}{500}$  inch long, this means that it swims 500 times its length in seven minutes. A human being walking at an average pace covers about 500 times his length, or approximately half a mile, in seven minutes. Relative to size, sperms swim about as fast as we walk.

#### ORGANS AND PROCESSES IN REPRODUCTION

**The Production of Sperms.** Sperms form in minute tubes within the testes (testicles), two oval-shaped organs suspended in

<sup>1</sup> HARTMAN, CARL G., "Time of Ovulation in Women," p. 9, The Williams & Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1936.

<sup>2</sup> GUTTMACHER, ALAN FRANK, "Life in the Making," p. 33, Garden City Publishing Company, Inc., New York, 1933.

<sup>3</sup> HARTMAN, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> PARSHLEY, H. M., "The Science of Human Reproduction," p. 71. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1933.

the scrotum. These tubes are coiled and would total several hundred feet in length if straightened out. While the sperms are still somewhat immature they pass from the testis through the *vas deferens* to the *seminal vesicles*, where they are stored temporarily. In the seminal vesicles they remain inert. During sexual excitation the spongy interior of the penis becomes engorged with blood, causing the organ to increase both in size and in rigidity and enabling it to enter the vagina. At the climax of sexual excitement sperms are mixed with the secretions

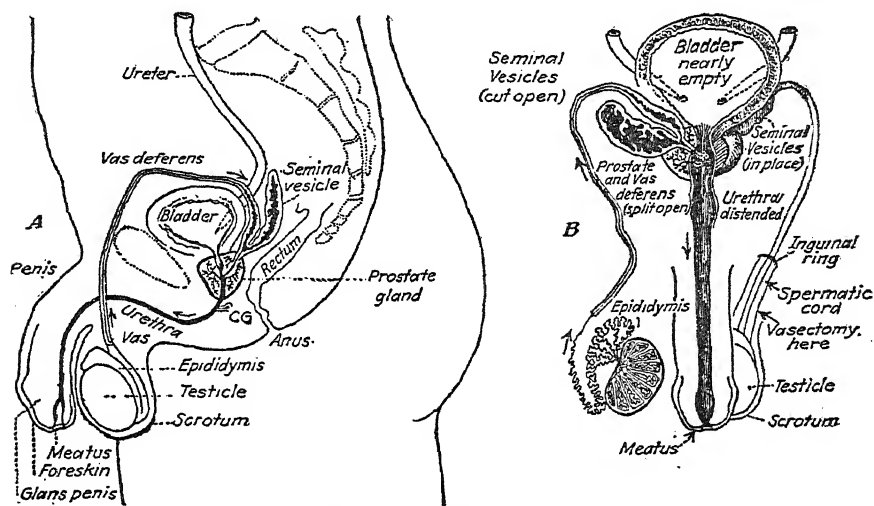


FIG. 7.—Male genital organs.

of several glands and the whitish, viscous mixture (termed *semen* or *seminal fluid*) passes, as a result of muscular contraction, through the *urethra* and thus out of the body. Not until they have been stimulated by the secretions, presumably of the prostate gland, do the sperms become active.

Seminal fluid is discharged (ejaculated) during sexual intercourse. It may also be discharged as a result of self-stimulation and periodically is discharged spontaneously during sleep when there has been no sexual excitement.

Sperms are produced in prodigious numbers. In a single ejaculation of seminal fluid (about a teaspoonful) there are normally 200 to 300 million sperms. Yet, compressed together, they would occupy a space equivalent in size only to the head of a pin. In a single ejaculation, then, there are more than enough

sperms, if every one were used, to produce a population two or three times that of the United States.

Once discharged, the sperms tend to move in all directions. There is no evidence that they swim against currents (rheotaxis or rheotropism) as was formerly postulated. They slowly diffuse throughout the space into which they are deposited.

How long sperms live after leaving the body is still unproved. Assuming that there are no unusual environmental conditions, estimates as to the life of the sperms within the female genital tract vary. Hartman says that they survive "little over a day at the maximum."<sup>1</sup> Kurzrok says the fertilizing power of sperms lasts usually less than forty-eight hours, though motility may be retained for a longer period.<sup>2</sup> Novak says the sperms may retain their motility for a number of days but are probably incapable of fertilizing the ovum after thirty-six hours.<sup>3</sup> Curtis thinks they retain their motility for at least five hours.<sup>4</sup> The only conclusion we may draw is that the period during which sperms remain effective is relatively brief, probably not more than a few hours at the most.

**The Production of Ova.** Ova are produced in the *ovaries*, two almond-shaped organs situated on either side of the *uterus*. The ovaries are 1 to 2 inches long, and in life are reddish-grey in color.<sup>5</sup> The formation of ova in the ovaries begins in prenatal life, but apparently the immature ova formed during this period are absorbed.<sup>6</sup> There are immature ova in the ovaries at birth, but the number is unknown. It has been estimated that at the age of three the number present is 400,000. By the age of eight this number has been reduced to about 36,000. By puberty the number is still further reduced.<sup>7</sup> Many of these ova degenerate during the life of the woman, and probably other new ova are

<sup>1</sup> HARTMAN, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> KURZROK, RAPHAEL, "The Endocrines in Obstetrics and Gynecology," p. 209, The Williams & Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1937.

<sup>3</sup> NOVAK, EMIL, "The Woman Asks the Doctor," pp. 121-122, The Williams & Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1935.

<sup>4</sup> CURTIS, ARTHUR, "Textbook of Gynecology," p. 231, W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1930.

<sup>5</sup> PARSHLEY, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>6</sup> FOLSOM, JOSEPH KIRK, (ed.), "Plan for Marriage," p. 116, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1938.

<sup>7</sup> PARSHLEY, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

produced, the total number of the latter being still in the realm of conjecture. Hartman estimates that there are millions.<sup>1</sup>

Ordinarily, ova mature or "ripen" one at a time in response to hormones produced by the anterior lobe of the pituitary gland.<sup>2</sup>

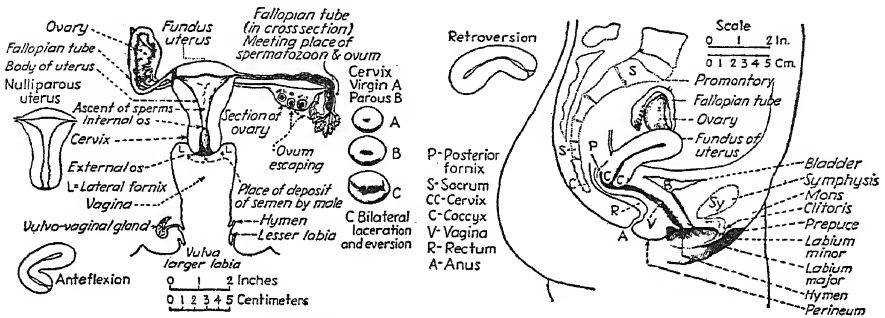


FIG. 8.—Female genital organs.

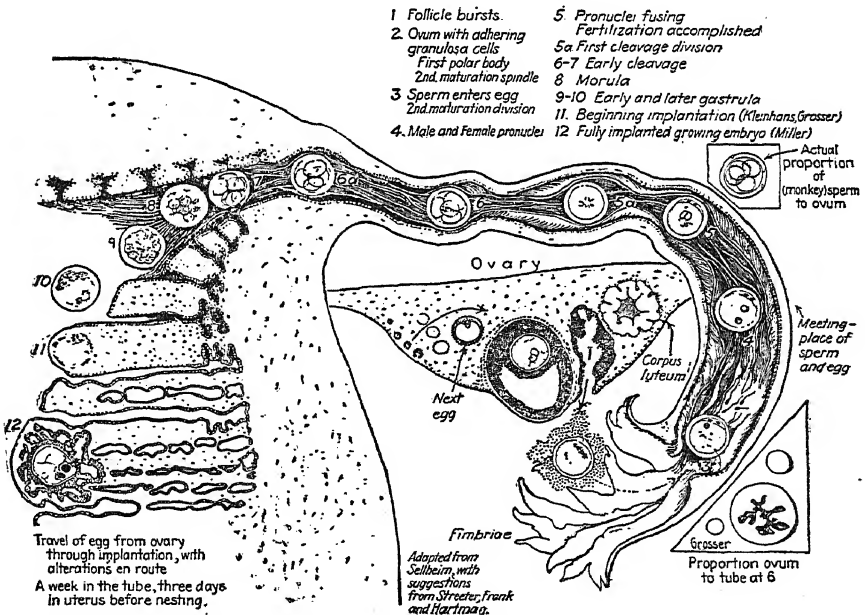


FIG. 9.—The journey of the ovum (enlarged) from ovulation to nidation.

During the maturing process the ovum migrates toward the surface of the ovary and there becomes surrounded by a fluid, which eventually bulges out the surface tissue of the ovary form-

<sup>1</sup> HARTMAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 22-23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.



ing a blisterlike prominence about the size of half a small cherry. This is the *Graafian follicle*. At length the follicle ruptures, not suddenly as if it burst but gradually, and the ovum is set free in the body cavity. This release of the ovum is termed *ovulation* and in the normal woman occurs about once in twenty-eight days. The exact moment of ovulation is at best difficult to determine—in most cases, impossible. There is usually no pain accompanying the rupture of the follicle, though some women claim to experience an instantaneous sharp pain at about the time ovulation might be expected to occur. Whether or not the ovaries alternate in the production of ova is an open question, and there is no reason to assume that it is the same in all women.

May we digress for a moment to point out what may later in our discussion prove to be a relevant fact? If ova are produced at the rate of one each twenty-eight days, or thirteen per year, during a woman's active sexual life she would produce approximately 300–400. In most cases, not more than three or four of these (about 1 per cent) are used to produce offspring. Only a microscopic proportion of the total number of ova present in her ovaries during her life ever function completely. The remainder die. What is true of a woman is even more obviously true of a man. In his active sexual life a man produces billions upon billions of sperms. Ordinarily, only three or four sperms function completely. The rest die. Where one cell can be used, thousands, millions are sown. Inevitably most of them must perish. Yet much of our controversy, laws, arguments, ill feeling, even persecution, in connection with contraception rests upon the life of that other one cell. It seems a bit incongruous.

After the ovum leaves the ovary, its life is subject to as much conjecture as is the life of sperms. Probably its effective life, the period during which it may be fertilized, is not more than a few hours, the probable maximum being twenty-four to forty-eight.<sup>1</sup>

There is no direct connection between ovaries and *Fallopian tubes*. The ends of the tubes in close conjunction with the ovaries divide into fingerlike projections (*fimbriae*). Both fimbriae and the interior surface of the tubes are lined with tiny

<sup>1</sup> NOVAK, *op. cit.*, p. 121; HARTMAN, *op. cit.*, p. 141; and SCHUMANN, EDWARD A., "Textbook of Obstetrics," pp. 102–103, W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1936.

hairlike protuberances (*cilia*), which have the capacity to move with a whiplike motion. They move more vigorously toward the uterus than toward the ovaries on the return stroke. Thus a current is set up. The ovum, which has been set free in the body cavity, is drawn into the tube near which it has been released and starts its migration toward the uterus. The ovum is moved along by the cilia, much as a ball might roll over a lawn if the blades of grass could move the ball. The passage through the tube has a diameter only about as large as a broom straw but that is ample for the movement of the egg.

The ovum is moved along also by *peristalsis*, that is, waves of muscular contraction in the tube.<sup>1</sup> One may envisage this process by imagining a marble in a rubber hose. By pressing the walls of the hose at the back of the marble with one's fingers and sliding the fingers along, one may move the marble. The entire journey from ovary to uterus requires a variously estimated period of about three to seven days. Unless it has been fertilized, the effective life of the ovum will have ceased before it has reached its destination.

**Fertilization.** Fertilization is the union of sperm and ovum. The fertilized egg is termed a *zygote* and is the beginning of a new individual. Fertilization usually takes place in one of the Fallopian tubes. How do sperm and egg get together in the tube?

As we saw, the ovum is carried through the tube in the direction of the uterus by a combination of ciliary action and tubal peristalsis. The 200 to 300 million sperms are deposited in the vagina near the relatively small entrance to the uterus (external os in the *cervix*, that is, the small end of the uterus). The sperms immediately begin to swim in all directions in the vagina. Some swim into the uterus and continue toward the tubes. But in the tubes there are ciliary currents flowing against the sperms. Thus there is created the engineering problem of moving two objects in opposite directions at the same time by the same forces. It is solved in an interesting way.

It is thought that temporary constricting rings of contraction occur in the wall of the Fallopian tube. These rings close off portions of the tube and form compartments inside. The cilia continue to beat and the fluid, moved along in currents, must go

<sup>1</sup> SCHUMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 48; and HARTMAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-45.

somewhere when it comes into contact with the end of the compartment. It goes back through the middle of the compartment, carrying the sperms with it. The sperms are carried away from the uterus in the middle of the tube and the egg is moved toward the uterus along the inside surface of the tube by the same currents.<sup>1</sup> Rings of contraction forming new compartments carry the sperms farther and farther up the tube, somewhat as a ship moves through the locks of a canal.

When a sperm meets the ovum, its head penetrates the latter's outer wall and finally fuses with the nucleus of the egg, recreating the twenty-four pairs of chromosomes. The sperm's tail drops off. After one sperm has penetrated the ovum, through some mysterious means all other sperms are prevented from entering. Since the life of both sperms and ovum is relatively brief, it is obvious that, for fertilization to occur, the sperms must be deposited very near the time of ovulation. At the time of fertilization the new individual's sex and hereditary traits are determined.

Which of the 200 to 300 million sperms will meet and fertilize the ovum is a matter of chance. Often none does. By chance some of the sperms will not swim into the uterus and will be discharged from the vagina. It is conceivable also that some sperms will be forced into the uterus through the movements of the genital organs. By chance some of those that do enter the uterus will swim into the wrong tube, since there is an ovum in only one tube in ordinary cases. Many of those that enter the correct tube will never swim as far as the ovum. Some will overshoot the mark, since there is ample space in the tube for sperms and egg to pass without meeting. The situation is similar to that which might exist if some one designated a spot on the ground, tossed 300 million pennies into the air, and attempted to predict which coin would fall upon the designated spot.

After fertilization, the ovum continues its journey to the uterus, in the wall of which it implants itself. We shall return to a discussion of that process later.

There is no way except through *insemination* (entrance of sperms into the female genital tract) that *conception* may occur. Insemination may be by natural means or may be done by

<sup>1</sup> SCHUMANN, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49; PARSHLEY, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-124.

artificial (mechanical) methods in those instances in which natural means fail. Artificial insemination has been practiced in animal breeding for years. It is practiced only rarely among human beings. Since the sperms do remain active for some time, it is possible that, if they were deposited at the external opening to the vagina, some might enter and conception might occur without coitus. The chances are very slight, but instances have been reported. In some animals ova will develop into new individuals without union with sperms, but this has never occurred in human beings, as far as anyone knows.

**Menstruation.** Going back for a moment to the time of ovulation, assume that fertilization does not follow. After the

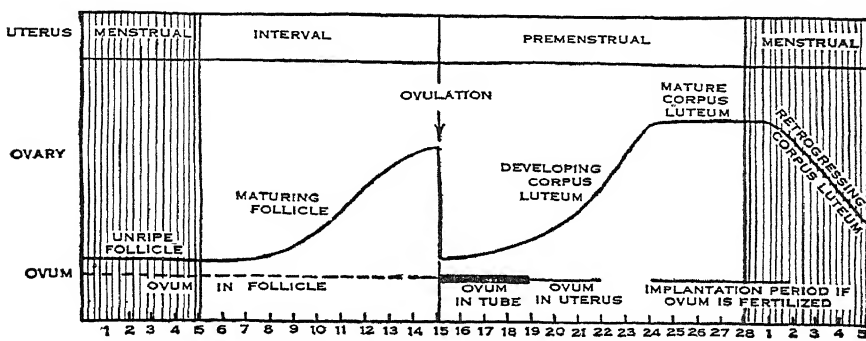


FIG. 10.—Schematic representation of the menstrual cycle.

ovum has been discharged from the follicle, the cells of the latter undergo change, forming the *corpus luteum* (yellow body), which protrudes from the surface of the ovary. It secretes substances which, together with certain gland secretions, prepare the uterus for the reception of the fertilized egg and would continue to regulate its development if conception occurred. Some of this preparation takes place before ovulation, as a result of follicular hormones. The uterus is a pear-shaped muscular organ about 3 inches long, weighing about 2 ounces. It is within this organ that the baby develops.

The secretions from the corpus luteum and the glands produce changes in the uterus. The lining is made ready for the implantation of the fertilized ovum and the blood supply is increased. Some of the blood vessels change, so that small "lakes" of blood (*lacunae*) are formed within the wall of the uterus. This process of preparation requires about two weeks. If fertiliza-

tion does not occur, these elaborate preparations for pregnancy are for naught and are consequently eliminated. The corpus luteum ceases to function. The membranous lining of the uterus loosens itself from the uterine wall, and the lining plus some of the blood from the lacunae are discharged. This is menstruation. Getting rid of the preparations for pregnancy requires several days and then the cycle begins over again with the ripening of another ovum. However, it is not ovulation that causes menstruation. Menstruation is caused by the absence of hormones from the corpus luteum and glands, which would continue to be produced in the event of fertilization. One might say that the absence of pregnancy causes menstruation. Every twenty-eight days, or thereabouts, for approximately thirty years, a woman is prepared to become a mother, the uterus is prepared anew for the arrival of a fertilized egg. Before new preparations are made, old ones are discarded. One might compare the uterus to a guest room. The hostess makes ready for visitors each month. If they arrive, the room is ready. If they fail to come, she changes the bed clothing to prepare for the possibility of having guests the following month.

The length of the menstrual cycle varies in different women. Often for some time after puberty (sexual maturity) the cycle is irregular. Then as the girl grows older, a rhythm is established. When women are considered as a group, the length of this rhythm falls on the normal curve of variability. Twenty-eight days, the ordinarily assumed cycle, is the one that falls near the middle of the curve.

In the individual woman the length of the cycle may vary from time to time for numerous reasons. Some women are regularly irregular, if we may so express it for emphasis. Hartman cites a study showing that only 0.7 per cent of cases were absolutely regular; 10 per cent varied from 1 to 3 days; 30 per cent, from 4 to 7 days; 44 per cent, up to 10 days; 56 per cent, 11 or more days.<sup>1</sup>

The most reliable data point to the middle portion of the menstrual cycle (reckoning from first day to first day) as the most probable time of ovulation. In a twenty-eight-day cycle this would mean about the fourteenth day. Perhaps a better way to look at it is to assume that ovulation occurs about two

<sup>1</sup> HARTMAN, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

weeks before the onset of menstruation, no matter how long the cycle.<sup>1</sup> But there is no conclusive evidence to prove that ovulation cannot occur at other times in the cycle. Kurzrok says it may occur between the ninth and twenty-first days.<sup>2</sup> Hartman says, "It would be going too far to read into the data at hand positive proof that ovulation might not occur exceptionally at any other period."<sup>3</sup> Studies of pregnancies following a single act of coitus point to the fact that ovulation may occur at times other than the middle of the cycle. Such studies, depending as they do upon women's memory rather than an investigator's observation, are not always reliable, however.

As intimated in an earlier chapter, menstruation is a natural, normal function and ordinarily is not exceedingly painful, although it may be accompanied by a brief period of depression, fatigue, or irritability. Painful menstruation (*dysmenorrhea*) is a consequence of some dysfunction, some maladjustment, which should be clearly distinguished in the reader's mind from the function itself. Dysmenorrhea may be the result of hypersensitivity of the lining of the uterus, unusual flexion of the uterus backward or forward so that the passage through the cervix is partially closed, atrophy of the uterus, tumors, inflammation of organs adjacent to the uterus, congestion due to constant standing, disorders of the endocrine glands, allergies, too-violent muscular activity, constipation, and other similar contributing factors.<sup>4</sup> Many cases of dysmenorrhea may be relieved by adequate medical treatment. A girl subject to painful periods should see her physician. She should not depend upon patent medicines purchased on the recommendation of advertisements or clerks in drugstores.

**Development of the Fetus.** After fertilization, the ovum continues its migration through the tube to the uterus. Before it reaches the latter it has already begun to divide, first into two cells, then into four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two, and so on. During the very early stages, however, it does not increase in

<sup>1</sup> SCHUMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> KURZROK, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> HARTMAN, *op. cit.*, p. 140. Reprinted with the permission of The Williams & Wilkins Company.

<sup>4</sup> BROWN, WILLIAM B., Menstruation and Dysmenorrhea, *Journal of the Missouri State Medical Association*, August, 1938, pp. 299-305.

size. When it reaches the uterus it remains free for a period. Then, after several days, it begins to imbed itself in the wall of the uterus, which through hormone action has been prepared for its arrival. This process of implantation is termed *nidation*. It is accomplished apparently through corrosive action, the zygote literally dissolving the tissues of the uterine wall and burying itself.

As the cells of the zygote continue to multiply, some become specialized to form the roots, so to speak, through which the fetus receives its food supply. These will be described later. Other cells form the fetus proper. Prenatal development extends through approximately nine calendar months. During this period the following changes occur. Figures and stages mentioned represent averages. Allowance must be made for variation in individual cases.

*End of First Month.* By the end of the first month the embryo is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch long. In this period it has increased about fifty times in size and 8,000 times in weight,<sup>1</sup> but it still weighs only a small fraction of an ounce. Many organs have begun to form, but the embryo does not look at all human. At this early stage, only an expert could distinguish a human embryo from that of a lower animal.

*End of Second Month.* The embryo is now about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches long. Its weight has increased about 500 times in comparison with the weight of the first month. It now weighs about 2 grams, or  $\frac{1}{14}$  ounce. The organs have continued their development and some have assumed their permanent functions. Tiny budlike projections that will form the limbs are noticeable, but fingers and toes are not yet completely formed. The tail has shrunk and will soon disappear, except for a few bones at the lower end of the spine (coccyx), which are embedded in other tissues. The face begins to look more nearly human. The embryo may move slightly, but this movement is not detectable by the mother. Genital organs have appeared and, if the embryo is aborted and carefully examined, the sex may be ascertained. After the second month the new individual is termed a fetus rather than an embryo.

*End of Third Month.* The fetus now weighs about an ounce and is approximately 3 inches long. Arms, legs, hands, fingers,

<sup>1</sup> GILBERT, MARGARET SHEA, "Biography of the Unborn," p. 12, The Williams & Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1938.

toes, and ears are formed. Nails have begun to form. The fetus appears definitely human but the head is very large in proportion to the rest of the body. Teeth have begun to develop in sockets in the jawbones. Vocal cords are formed.

*End of Fourth Month.* The weight is now 5 to 6 ounces and the length, 6 to 8 inches. This latter represents approximately one-half the height at birth. The head is still disproportionately large. The heartbeat is audible through a stethoscope. Limb movements may sometimes be felt by the mother. The body of the fetus is covered with a downlike coat (the *lanugo*), which in most cases disappears during the eighth or ninth month. Eyebrows and eyelashes have appeared. The skin is reddish and somewhat transparent. The skin ridges, which in later life will make fingerprints possible, have already formed.

*End of Fifth Month.* The fetus now weighs about 1 pound and is 10 to 12 inches long. Nails are well formed. Head hair has appeared. A mixture of fatty secretion and dead skin cells forms a cheesy covering (*vernix caseosa*) on the surface of the body. Fetal movements may be clearly felt by the mother. If born at this time, the fetus will survive only a few moments at best.

*End of Sixth Month.* The weight is about 2 pounds and the length, about 14 inches. The child may live for a few hours if born at this time but has only an extremely slight chance of survival.

*End of Seventh Month.* The weight has increased to about 3 pounds and the length to about 16 inches. A child born at this time has a fair chance of survival.

*Eighth and Ninth Months.* The weight increases by this time to about 7 to 7½ pounds and the length to about 20 inches. The *lanugo* disappears. Body organs have assumed their permanent functions in most cases. The skin is still reddish. The eyes are bluish in color and their final tone cannot well be predicted. Fatty tissue has formed under the skin, so that the fetus looks less wrinkled than in earlier months. The *vernix caseosa* may persist even until birth at full term.

It may be seen by reviewing what has been said above that the fetus gains about 80 per cent of its weight after the fifth month and about 50 per cent during the last two months. A child born at the end of the eighth month has a good chance of survival,



much better than at the end of the seventh month, in spite of the common superstition to the contrary. In fact the closer to full term (nine months) the birth occurs, the better are the chances of the child's living.

**Duration of Pregnancy.** Pregnancy lasts about 272 to 280 days (forty weeks; nine calendar months). Conception cannot occur unless there is an ovum to be fertilized. Thus conception usually occurs somewhere in the middle of the menstrual cycle. It is impossible to ascertain the exact date of fertilization, even though the exact date of fruitful coitus is known, since time is required for the sperm to reach the egg. A variation of a few days in the length of pregnancy is neither unusual nor abnormal. It is, therefore, impossible to set the exact date of the child's birth. An approximate date may be set. The simplest means for doing so is to add seven days to the first day of the last menstrual period and count back three months. For example, assume that the wife last began to menstruate on June 10. Add seven days—June 17. Count back three months—March 17. The baby will be born about March 17 of the following year.

A physician who promises delivery on a predetermined date because he plans to go on his vacation, or because the couple want the child born on a holiday, or for some similar reason is either deceiving the couple or planning to resort to induced labor. The latter is not considered the best obstetrical practice when there is no acceptable indication for it.

The nine-month period is considered full term. Delivery of the child after seven months of prenatal development (that is, during the eighth or ninth month) is considered premature. Before the end of the seventh month delivery is termed abortion. The common term *miscarriage* is applied to spontaneous abortion.

**Fetal Protection and Food Supply.** As the fetus grows, the uterus enlarges to accommodate it, expanding from a small pear-shaped organ about 3 inches long and weighing about 2 ounces, to an oval organ about 20 inches long, weighing about 2 pounds. Fitting snugly against the inside surface, much as the bladder fits tight against the inner surface of the leather covering of a basketball, there develop several membranes. The one that will concern us is the *amnion*. Inside the amnion are

1 to 4 pints of *amniotic fluid*. In this fluid the fetus is suspended. At first it floats about, anchored by the placenta and cord. As it increases in size it tends to fit more snugly inside the uterus. The fetus, then, has an aquatic existence.

Earlier in this chapter it was stated that, when the fertilized ovum implants itself in the wall of the uterus, it continues to divide and some of the cells form roots, so to speak. These roots

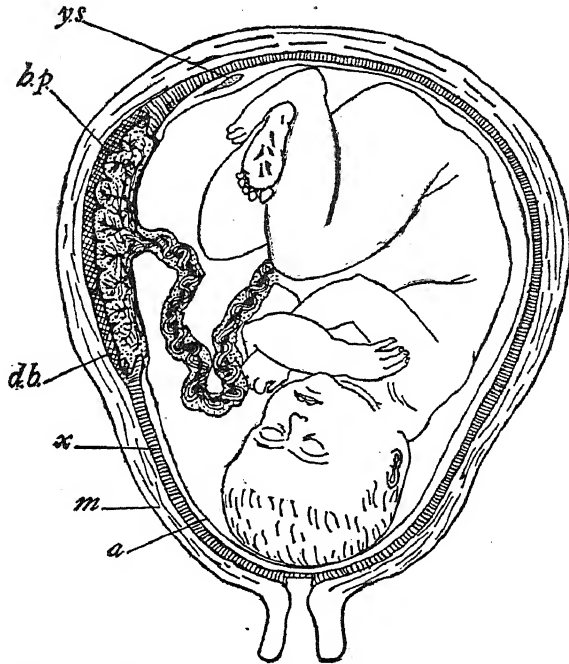


FIG. 11.—Full-term fetus in uterus: *ys*, yolk sac; *bp*, placenta; *db*, decidua basalis (the portion of the uterus to which the placenta is attached); *x*, decidua vera (the lining of the uterus); *m*, muscular wall of uterus; *a*, amnion.

multiply eventually to form the *placenta*, a disk-shaped organ, which when fully developed is 7 to 9 inches in diameter, about 1 inch thick in the middle, and weighs about a pound, or approximately one-sixth the weight of the fetus. On the side in contact with the uterine wall the placenta is covered with thousands of rootlike projections (*villi*), which branch out in all directions and ramify through the tissue of the uterus. The area of a smooth disk 9 inches in diameter is approximately 64 square inches. The branching and rebranching of the villi increase the area of the uterine side of the placenta to some 70 square feet, about

four times the skin area of an adult—<sup>1</sup> a fact that is important when we consider that this means 70 square feet of absorption surface for food and oxygen.

The villi are rich in blood vessels. These converge to form several large vessels (two arteries and one vein), which extend through the umbilical cord to the fetus. The cord is about 2 feet long and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter. It is twisted into a spiral by

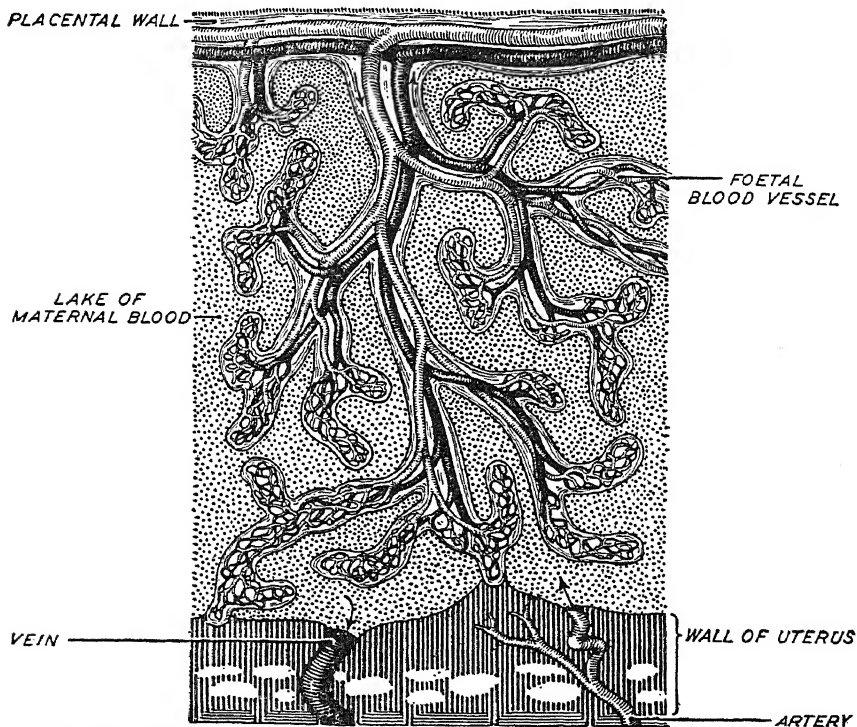


FIG. 12.—Diagrammatic presentation of placental villi highly magnified.

the uneven growth of the blood vessels and the movements of the fetus.

There is no direct connection between the blood stream of the mother and that of the fetus. The villi protrude into the lacunae (the lakes of blood formed by the enlargement of the uterine blood vessels). All food material that reaches the fetus must pass through the membranes of the villi. The process may be compared roughly with the absorption of water by a willow tree

<sup>1</sup> SCHUMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

growing on the bank of a stream and having some of its roots extending into and bathed by the water of the stream. Waste products pass in the opposite direction and enter the mother's blood stream through the membranes of the villi. The actual process of the food's passing through the membranes is not difficult to understand when one stops to realize that all food passing into his own blood stream must be in solution and pass through the membranes of his intestinal tract and his own blood vessels, since there is no direct connection between blood vessels and intestines. Oxygen is absorbed from the mother's blood just as food is. Thus the fetus can live without breathing.

The fetus is in a situation comparable with that of a deep-sea diver, if we imagine the latter receiving not only oxygen but also food from the boat at the surface. The fetus lives in a controlled environment, and little that occurs in the outside world seriously affects him. Temperature is controlled by the mother's body temperature. Food and water are filtered through the membranes of the villi. The amniotic fluid acts as a shock absorber. Most disease germs are filtered out by the membranes of the villi. Only relatively few types of bacteria can pass through from mother to child, and these not in every case. There are records to show that the organisms producing syphilis, tuberculosis, smallpox, and some other diseases do sometimes penetrate the defenses.

If the maternal blood stream does not afford the fetus the food materials he requires, parasite that he is, he will "eat" his mother. Not that he literally ingests her, but he will draw upon her tissues for his own growth. However, it is not true, nowadays at least, that a woman must lose "a tooth for every child." The intelligent woman carefully regulates her diet so that the child is supplied with the food, salts, calcium, and other substances that he needs, without his consuming those that she has stored in her own body. Whether the mother's diet influences the weight of the child is still an unsettled question.

One may readily understand why a woman gains weight during pregnancy. There is a tendency for fat to be deposited. The breasts enlarge, preparatory to supplying the baby with food. The fully developed placenta weighs 1 to 2 pounds, the enlarged uterus about 2, the amniotic fluid 1 to 4, and the child itself, when it has reached full term, 7 to 8.

**Maternal Impressions.** Can the baby be affected by what the mother does, sees, or thinks during pregnancy? There is a common superstition that it can. The following "instances" of maternal impressions are typical. As is common during pregnancy, a woman developed a persistent craving for a particular food, in this case, cherries. At the market she found that cherries were expensive, because out of season, and she could not buy any. When the baby was born it had a growth "just like a cherry" on its upper lip. A woman was chopping wood, holding a small ax in her right hand. The ax slipped and cut her left hand. She grasped her left hand with her right one to stop the bleeding. When her baby was born it had no fingers on its left hand. A pregnant woman went on a picnic with some friends. Some of the party wanted to go for a boat ride on a small stream. When this woman stepped into the boat, she felt nauseated. During the ride the party came to a bridge. So great was the woman's fear of passing under it that she persuaded her friends to turn back. Forty years later the child, unborn at the time of this incident, was invited to go for a boat ride with some friends. She refused to go because she was afraid. Both mother and daughter explained the fear on the basis of the former's experience nearly half a century before.

There is no way known by which such experiences can affect the fetus. What actually happens in cases of "observed" maternal impressions and birthmarks is probably this. A child is born with some particular trait or later exhibits certain behavior. The mother wonders about the trait and seeks for an explanation. During her nine months pregnancy she is almost certain to have had some experience into which she can read what she thinks should be there. Then by turning the situation around she has an "explanation" of the trait. It is a rather clear-cut instance of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*. If the child has no birthmark, no explanation is required and the woman's experiences during pregnancy are not recalled.

**Sex Determination.** The sex of the fetus is determined by the combination of chromosomes in the fertilized egg. Other factors may play a role, in some cases, in causing the individual to shift from one side of the sexual fence to the other or to fall into an equivocal position somewhere between maleness and femaleness.

Nevertheless, at the moment of fertilization the pattern is usually set.

With regard to the chromosomes of sex determination, all ova are alike; they all bear what is termed an  $x$  chromosome. Sperms bear either an  $x$  or a  $y$  chromosome. The  $y$  chromosome is somewhat smaller than the  $x$ . When in the process of fertilization an  $xx$  combination is produced, the individual develops into a female. An  $xy$  combination produces a male. In a sense, then, sex is dependent upon the type of sperm that fertilizes a given ovum. Since on the  $x$  and  $y$  chromosomes there are more genes than those determining sex, certain traits tend to be sex-linked, that is, they tend to be exhibited by males or females as the case may be.

Sex determination in the genetic sense is not the same as ascertaining the sex of the fetus. The statement was made earlier in this chapter that the sex of the fetus might be ascertained late in the second month; but this cannot be done by the mother or the obstetrician while the fetus is in the uterus. The difference between male and female heartbeat is not reliable, since there is so much overlapping of averages. The sex may be ascertained in case of abortion, but then the fetus dies. For the first six weeks or so the cells that will form the gonads (ovaries or testes) are undifferentiated, and the sex cannot be ascertained at all.

Guttmacher mentions a number of supposed "tests" for ascertaining the sex of the fetus which have come to his attention.<sup>1</sup> According to these "tests," if the baby kicks on the mother's right side it will be a boy; if it kicks on her left side it will be a girl. A boy is "carried high," a girl is "carried low." Loss of hair by the mother indicates a girl; more profuse hair growth, a boy. A boy is more active than a girl. If the mother develops a preference for sweet foods, the baby will be a girl; a preference for sour foods indicates a boy. Boys are believed to cause more nausea. As Guttmacher points out, all such "tests" are without foundation in fact. Our only conclusion is that there is no ready means of ascertaining the baby's sex until after birth.

Means for controlling the sex of the child are as fantastic as some of the "tests." GIRL IS BORN IN ACID TEST TO FIX SEX reads a newspaper headline. The article goes on to say that the use

<sup>1</sup> GUTTMACHER, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-176.

of an acid douche will insure the birth of a girl; an alkaline douche, the birth of a boy. A current theory expounded in some quarters holds that if the wife is "dominant" the child will be a girl, if the husband is "dominant" the child will be a boy. Another current theory states it a bit differently, holding that the sex of the child is dependent upon the degree of masculinity and femininity in both persons. Such theories have no basis in fact. At the present stage of scientific knowledge there is no means by which the sex of the child may be controlled.

### SIGNS OF PREGNANCY

When a woman has reason to believe that she may be pregnant, she wants to know the facts as soon as possible so that she may plan accordingly. There are several types of symptoms that may aid in diagnosing her condition. These are termed *presumptive* and *positive* signs.<sup>1</sup>

**Presumptive Signs.** *Temporary Cessation of Menstruation.* This is one of the first signs noticeable, but it is not reliable, since factors other than pregnancy (for example, illness, tumors, nervous shock, experience highly colored with emotion, change of climate) may interrupt the menstrual cycle. Some women are so irregular that an occasional rather long delay is not unusual.

*Morning Sickness.* This disturbance occurs in many but by no means all pregnant women. Schumann reports an incidence of 80 per cent in his experience but, of these 80 per cent, only 40 per cent experienced severe illness. In 60 per cent of the cases the illness was mild and only slightly annoying. In only one case in 600 does a woman become seriously ill.<sup>2</sup> Morning sickness may be relieved by medical treatment and usually disappears by the end of the third month. Some cases are due to physiological changes, but there is reason to believe that others are the result of suggestion. If a woman has heard that illness accompanies pregnancy, she may expect it and have her expectations fulfilled through the machinations of her own mind. If she fears pregnancy, that too may contribute to her illness. The fact that morning sickness may be due to suggestion is shown by those unusual cases in which it occurs vicariously in the husband. Certainly his nausea could not be the result of the physiological

<sup>1</sup> SCHUMANN, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-118.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107, 257.

changes accompanying pregnancy. Morning sickness is only a presumptive sign, since there are innumerable factors that may play a part in producing nausea.

*Increased Frequency of Urination.* This is due to congestion in some blood vessels.

*Increased Vaginal Secretion.* This is especially noticeable in women who have previously had considerable vaginal discharge.

*Changes in the Breasts.* Slight pain, a sense of fullness, increased size of nipples, increased pigmentation around the nipples, secretion of a fluid termed *colostrum*, increased size of breasts, prickling or tingling sensations, increased blood supply so that blood vessels may be seen under the skin—these are all symptoms accompanying pregnancy but are not positive proof that conception has occurred.

*Changes in the Vaginal Lining.* The lining becomes congested and bluish in color.

*Enlargement of the Abdomen.* This occurs rather late for diagnosis in ordinary cases and may be due to factors other than pregnancy, for example, tumors.

*Softening of the Cervix.* In the nonpregnant state, the cervix is hard and firm.

*Changes in the Form, Size, and Position of the Uterus.* As pregnancy progresses, the uterus becomes larger, less pear-shaped and more nearly globular, and at first tends to slope forward more than ordinarily.

*Ballottement, or Repercussion.* The fetus is at first too small and, late in pregnancy, too large for this sign to be used; but between the sixteenth and the thirty-second week the physician may, during an examination of the woman, feel the floating fetus rebound against the wall of the uterus.<sup>1</sup>

**Positive Signs.** The positive signs of pregnancy are certain evidence of its occurrence, since these signs can be produced by no factors other than a live fetus.

*Movement of the Fetus in the Uterus.* This movement is noticeable for the first time usually during the fourth or the fifth month, that is, about halfway through the pregnancy. The fetal movements are often vigorous and may be distinctly felt by the mother. In advanced pregnancy they may be seen by an observer.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112–113.



*Fetal Heartbeat.* This is audible by means of a stethoscope, usually at about the fourth month. The rate varies from 120 to 160 beats per minute, which is about twice the mother's rate under normal conditions. Thus the two beats may be distinguished.

*The Shape of the Fetus.* This may be felt through the abdominal wall.

*The Appearance of the Fetus in an X-ray Photograph.* This method of diagnosis is useless early in pregnancy and at best carries with it some risk. Therefore, it is not ordinarily used.

#### TESTS FOR PREGNANCY

The positive signs are observable only when pregnancy is well advanced. The presumptive signs are not conclusive and few of these are observable during the early stages of fetal growth. The importance of some means of diagnosing pregnancy very shortly after it begins is apparent. This means has been provided by pregnancy tests.

A test demonstrated in 1928 by Ascheim and Zondek is based upon the fact that during pregnancy there is a surplus of hormones secreted by the anterior portion of the pituitary gland. Some of this surplus finds its way into the woman's urine as waste material. When urine containing this hormone is injected into immature female mice, ovulation occurs. Six mice are used, so that the test results may be more accurate. Five of the mice are injected six times during a period of forty-eight hours. The other mouse is kept for comparison. After one hundred hours the mice are killed and examined. Indications of ovulation show that pregnancy exists.

The Ascheim-Zondek test is accurate in about 99 per cent of cases. It may be used during the first month of pregnancy. Instances have been reported in which the test was positive five days after the first menstrual period missed.<sup>1</sup> Kurzrok says<sup>2</sup> that in two-thirds of pregnancies this test will show positive when the woman is one to two days overdue; more than 90 per cent will show positive when the woman is ten days overdue. Occasionally a positive result is obtained even before a period is missed.

In the Friedman test a rabbit is used in place of mice. The rabbit must be an immature female that has been isolated from

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>2</sup> KURZROK, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-244.

males for at least thirty days. Most animals ovulate at certain intervals, irrespective of sexual union. The female rabbit ovulates only after coitus. Into the test rabbit is injected some urine from the woman in question. Twenty-four to forty-eight hours after the injection the rabbit's ovaries are examined. If ovulation has begun, the woman is shown to be pregnant.

If carefully administered, the Friedman test is practically 100 per cent accurate. It will often indicate the presence of pregnancy within two weeks after conception, in some cases within a few days afterward, although to obtain incontrovertible results it should not be administered so early as that. A rabbit may be used more than once if a sufficient interval elapses between tests. Except for the cost of the animal, which is not exorbitant and is usually cheerfully borne by the woman and her husband, this test has no serious shortcomings.<sup>1</sup>

The small percentage of errors in these tests is due to the fact that test animals vary slightly in their reactions, and complications in the woman may in rare cases cause the test to show positive when she is not pregnant or negative when she is. A positive test result does not prove that the fetus is alive; it proves only that some of the placental tissue is alive. The placenta may live for some time after the death of the fetus; but the death of the latter follows promptly upon the death of the former. Furthermore, in some cases the test may show positive after childbirth or abortion, since apparently enough of the hormone remains in the mother's blood stream so that some passes into the urine.<sup>2</sup> Both tests are used to supplement rather than to replace other means of diagnosing pregnancy.

#### CHOOSING AN OBSTETRICIAN

The importance of adequate prenatal care for the prospective mother cannot be overemphasized. Her health, both present and future, and her baby's well-being hinge in large measure upon her care during pregnancy. There are many useful books and pamphlets on this subject, and the reader is urged to refer to them. The woman's best protection, however, is a reliable, well-trained, careful obstetrician.

<sup>1</sup> SCHUMANN, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-123.

<sup>2</sup> KURZROK, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

The obstetrician should be chosen not only for his ability to diagnose and treat disease. Pregnancy is not a disease. He should be chosen primarily for his ability to handle cases of pregnancy. What is significant is the number of successful deliveries he has to his credit, not the number of operations or the number of occasions on which he has let women reach the brink of disaster only to save them in the nick of time.

Preferably, he (or she) should be a physician equipped to handle the pregnancy from the first visit to the care of mother and child after they leave the hospital. He need not be able singlehanded to meet all emergencies, for that is too much to ask of any physician. But it is absolutely essential that he be able to recognize and detect emergencies and be willing to call in a consultant or a specialist if necessary.

The obstetrician's personality is important, since his contact with the prospective mother is somewhat intimate. She should not be forced to have a physician whom she dislikes and with whom she cannot get along. His training is important. So is the extent of his experience. Does he have enough obstetric cases to gain experience? Does he keep abreast of new developments? Is obstetrics his special interest or only incidental in a general practice? Will he, indeed may he, take his patients to a first-class hospital? All these considerations are more important than his age.

A problem not infrequently faced by young couples is that of choosing a physician soon after having settled in a new community, before sufficient time has elapsed for them to become thoroughly acquainted. In such cases, information may be gathered from friends or from persons at the husband's place of business. The local hospital may yield some data. The couple may write to their physician in their home town and ask him to recommend someone.

Before the couple put their case in the physician's hands, they should talk it over with him. Let them remember that they are employing him, not he them. They have a right to know what his techniques are, how many visits he will recommend before delivery, what care he will continue after delivery, to what hospital he takes his patients, what is his attitude toward induced labor, what he does concerning relief from pain, what the total cost will be.

Once the obstetrician is chosen, he should be told everything relevant to the case. No detail, no matter how insignificant it may seem to the couple, should be withheld. Questions should be freely asked. Any obstetrician worth his salt would rather have the couple ask innumerable questions than let a clue remain hidden which, if revealed, might prevent complications.

Once the obstetrician is chosen, too, his instructions should be followed faithfully, explicitly, and thoroughly. Obstetricians sometimes complain that educated women do not follow directions as readily as do uneducated ones, that one of the greatest problems in dealing with educated women is to get them to cooperate. Apparently ignorant women hold the doctor in greater esteem. In their eyes he has great prestige. The couple should never let other people's advice supersede the doctor's instructions. If they do not like the way he handles their case, they may change obstetricians. But as long as they accept a particular physician's services, they should cooperate to the utmost and have complete confidence.

### PREGNANCY AND THE COUPLE'S ADJUSTMENT

There are psychological as well as physiological aspects to pregnancy. It is the door through which a couple enter a new stage of existence. Too often it is thought of in terms of obstetrical details and temporary inconvenience or pain rather than in terms of the awe-inspiring process that it is. The anticipation, the curiosity as to the baby's sex and appearance, the planning for the child's arrival are all more important than the inconvenience. Incidentally, a couple have the equivalent of a school year to prepare themselves for the coming of the child and to gather information on child rearing. They should not postpone doing their assignment until the day before the examination.

We are accustomed to saying that such and such a woman is pregnant. In one sense that is correct; in another it is a mistake. It would be nearer the truth to say that there is pregnancy in the family. Pregnancy is in many ways a social condition. It certainly involves both husband and wife; it also involves their relatives, the mores, the laws of the state.

Motherhood and baby care begin not at birth but at conception. A woman is a mother for nine months before her child is born and should act and be treated as such. The father's case

is similar. His responsibility and new status do not begin with the passing out of cigars.

Having a baby is a joint enterprise from the very beginning. The father's physiological role may not be so prominent as the mother's, but he has indispensable psychological and economic functions. The husband suffering the throes of becoming a parent is made the butt of many a joke. Much humorous discussion and literature is directed toward the "care and treatment" of expectant fathers. The father's situation is anything but a joke. A child needs two parents and the father has a responsibility. There are many things that he may do to make the wife's nine months of pregnancy less trying. He may assist with the housework or employ someone to do it. He may make certain that he and his wife do interesting things in their leisure time. He may prepare for the baby's coming by making things for the nursery. He should understand what is occurring so that he may help the wife follow the doctor's instructions and will know what to do in case an emergency arises. The wife is likely to be more than ordinarily dependent upon him, and he can do much to color her attitude, favorably or unfavorably, toward both the present and future pregnancies. Some pregnant women develop temporary personality traits that make them somewhat difficult to live with. It is important that the husband understand this fact and adjust himself accordingly. To some degree he may prepare himself to understand his wife during pregnancy by learning to understand her reactions during her menstrual cycle.

Not the least of the father's functions is economic. Babies cost money. When the total cost of a child is taken into consideration, reckoning from early pregnancy through infancy, childhood, adolescence, to young adulthood, and including all expenses borne by parents from the initial doctor's fee to college education, the picture is breath-taking. Dublin and Lotka have calculated that, with a yearly income of \$2,500, it costs a family almost \$7,500 to rear a child to the age of eighteen. The reader probably cost or will have cost his parents a minimum of about \$10,000 to get him to the age of twenty. Each time a couple have a child, the financial responsibility they assume is roughly equivalent to that involved in purchasing a new home.

A question that often arises in connection with the prospective father is whether he should be in the delivery room when his

baby is born. Some hospitals and obstetricians will permit him to be present; others will not. Much depends upon the attitude of the wife. If his presence would reassure her, he may be useful. If his presence would cause her to hesitate to feel free and make her worry about seeming afraid, he would be less than useless. Some men want to witness the birth; others do not. Some feel that witnessing it makes the child seem more their own, since they are more nearly participators.

There are several rather weighty arguments against the husband's being present at the delivery, even if doctor and hospital permit him. He may get in the way of doctor or nurses. He may become emotionally upset and conclude that the doctor is not doing all he can. If he presumes to give the doctor suggestions, he becomes a nuisance. He carries germs and shakes them off onto the delivery room floor or spreads them through the air. Through long strain he may faint. Doctor and nurses usually have many duties more important than reviving an unconscious father. Medically speaking, he is usually of little or no help.

A pregnant woman deserves consideration; but for her own sake she should not be treated as if she were ill unless she actually is ill. Pregnancy is a normal, natural state; it is not a disease. The behavior of some women becomes unpredictable during pregnancy and may at times be uncontrollable. This fact must be taken into consideration by family and friends. But some women take advantage of their pregnancy to make unwarranted demands and have people wait upon them unnecessarily.

Unless her obstetrician advises to the contrary, a woman may with some exceptions pursue her regular normal activities during the early part of pregnancy. There are many sports in which she may engage, although she may not usually ride horseback, dive, or do similar things more or less violent in character. Long automobile rides are usually not permitted, and in the latter part of pregnancy all car riding may be forbidden, depending upon the individual woman's condition. Walking is usually not only acceptable but advisable.

Pregnancy may be an entirely new experience for a particular woman, but it is hardly a new experience for the race. As her appearance changes, she may think she is so conspicuous that she would be the center of attention if she appeared in public.

As a matter of fact, the greater portion of the public have seen pregnant women before and she will scarcely be noticed. If she dresses sensibly, wearing attractive maternity garments that fit, instead of baglike smocks or tight formal gowns, there is no reason why she should not move freely about in public. For her own morale, as well as for the benefit of persons who observe her, she should keep herself as attractive as her resources permit. If the husband realizes how near are clothes to the ordinary woman's heart and knows that her morale depends in part upon her appearance, he will encourage her to keep attractive during pregnancy, even though it may mean extra expense when the couple are saving for the baby.

#### CHILDBIRTH

When the fetus has reached full term, that is, when it has reached its full prenatal development, hormones secreted by the glands cause the muscular tissue of the uterus to contract and labor begins. During pregnancy the uterine muscle cells increase, not only in number but also in size, to prepare the organ for its role in expelling the fetus. Before contraction of the uterus has begun, the fetus has already shifted its position so that it is lower in the pelvis and has started to enter the birth canal. As the uterus contracts, the cervix dilates until it is practically eradicated for the time.

Labor may be divided into three stages: first stage—from the beginning of contraction to the eradication of the cervix; second stage—from this point to the birth of the child; third stage—from the birth of the child to the expulsion of the placenta (afterbirth). In the first stage the pains accompanying contraction are at the beginning slight and rather far apart (twenty minutes or more). As labor progresses, they occur closer together in an increasingly rapid rhythm. As contraction proceeds, one side of the amniotic sac ("bag of waters") is forced by pressure to protrude through the opening in the cervix. This sac, filled as it is with fluid, serves as a dull wedge and apparently has as its function the even and not too rapid dilation of the cervix. At length the sac bursts and the amniotic fluid is discharged, serving as a lubricant for the passage of the baby through the birth canal. If the membrane ruptures prematurely, the lubricant and wedge are absent and the cervix is dilated

more rapidly than normally. Too rapid dilation is not desirable. Such cases are termed *dry births*. If there are no complications, a dry birth may be little different from a normal one. In the presence of complications, the duration, difficulty, and risk to mother and child may be increased.

Labor lasts on the average about sixteen hours for first babies, about eleven hours for subsequent deliveries. There is not severe pain during the entire period. This is the total time from first pains to the completion of the birth. Only about one woman in ten has labor lasting for as much as thirty hours. Only one in 125 has an unusually brief labor (three hours or less).<sup>1</sup>

As labor progresses from first to second stage, the child moves slowly through the birth canal, being pushed along by the contractions of the uterus. The tissue of that portion of the uterus that is normally the cervix, but is now more or less indistinguishable from the rest of the organ except for the opening, moves up over the child's head, much as a kid glove is gradually worked onto the fingers of the wearer. In about 95 per cent of cases the baby enters the birth canal head first. In the other 5 per cent he enters feet first, buttocks first (breech presentation), or in some other manner. In many instances in which there is not a head presentation the obstetrician may turn the child in the uterus. This process is termed *version* and may be done by external manipulations or by the doctor's working through the vagina.

The child's head is almost as broad as its shoulders. Owing to the relatively large proportion of cartilage and small proportion of bone in its skeleton, its whole body is somewhat flexible. The head is more rigid than most parts, but even the head yields somewhat to pressure. At times a child's head is pressed slightly out of shape during the birth process. This is often a matter of much concern to young couples who have just had their first baby. They conclude that it is abnormal, not knowing that nature takes care of this problem and that, unless there has been some complication, the head will soon reshape itself.

The child's head must pass through the bony opening in the mother's pelvis, and the fit is rather snug. For this reason it is most important for the mother to have the obstetrician measure

<sup>1</sup> GUTTMACHER, ALAN FRANK, "Into This Universe," pp. 170-171, Viking Press, Inc., New York, 1937.



her pelvis as soon as she becomes pregnant, if he has not done so before. When he knows what to expect, he may prepare for it. In a sense the child's head is like a cat's whiskers. Any opening through which the head will pass will accommodate the rest of the body. Hence, after the head is born the rest is relatively easy and the body is rapidly expelled.

Normally the child cries as soon as it is born; in some cases, as soon as the head is born. This cry fills the lungs with air and is the baby's declaration of independence. If the child does not cry spontaneously, oxygen or a mixture of carbon dioxide and oxygen is introduced into its respiratory tract—instrumentally, if the delivery is in a hospital; by direct contact of the doctor's lips with the baby's, if no instrumental means are available. This method usually resuscitates the infant.

As soon as the child is born, the umbilical cord is tied in two places near the baby's body. It is then severed between the ligatures, the ligatures serving to prevent hemorrhage. The stub of cord is bound close to the infant's body and eventually drops off, leaving a small scar. To prevent infection, silver nitrate or some equally effective substance is put into the infant's eyes. This is required by state law. If it were not required by law, its importance would lead the doctor to do it anyway. This is not, as some persons choose to interpret it, a veiled implication that the parents may have a venereal disease.

It is interesting to note in how many ways nature prepares the child for the birth process. His body is flexible. He is temporarily immune to many common diseases. He can live for at least several minutes without breathing. He requires no food for a day or two. He is relatively insensitive to pain. He cannot recall the experience.

Shortly after the birth of the child, usually within a half hour or so, the contractions of the uterus separate the placenta from the uterine wall, and the placenta with the cord is expelled. This is the afterbirth. It has served its purpose and is now waste material, although it is carefully examined by the doctor to make sure that no small portion of tissue has remained in the uterus to serve as the seat of infection or to cause hemorrhage. After the placenta is expelled, hormones cause the uterus to contract, squeezing the ends of the blood vessels together and preventing bleeding.

From this point on for about six weeks, the mother goes through a period of recuperation during which the genital organs gradually assume their original size and shape. Recovery is usually rapid and proceeds without mishap if the woman follows the physician's instructions. If she does so, there is no reason why she should have a permanently protruding abdomen or become permanently overweight.

If, because of unyielding tissue or muscular contraction at the vaginal end of the birth canal, the passage of the child is impeded to the point of risk to mother or baby, the obstetrician may facilitate the child's progress by using instruments. An instrument birth is classified as an operative birth. Instruments may be weapons of destruction as well as aids to delivery and should be employed only by a skilled physician and only when there is ample indication that they are needed. Only a careless, hasty doctor uses instruments unnecessarily. In fact, with regard to induced labor and other means of speeding up delivery, as well as the use of instruments, the best obstetrical practice dictates not only extreme caution but conservatism. In 90 to 95 per cent of cases delivery occurs without unusual difficulty. Unless there is ample reason to justify interference, the less the doctor interferes with the delivery, the safer and more satisfactory is the process. This does not mean that anyone may be a good obstetrician because there is little for him to do. It is a good obstetrician who knows when and when not to do something.

In extreme cases, when the passage of the baby through the bony pelvic opening is impossible or would entail unusual risk, *Caesarian section* may be used. A Caesarian section is an abdominal operation in which the uterus is opened surgically and the child is removed from the mother without its passing through the birth canal. Ordinarily the obstetrician can predict whether such an operation will be necessary and plans may be made accordingly. Only in emergencies is Caesarian section used as a last resort after labor has begun. Childbirth is a natural process. Caesarian section is not, and it involves risk of infection, as any major operation does. In skilled hands the outcome is usually favorable and is also usually fraught with less risk than an extraordinarily difficult delivery. A woman may have several Caesarian sections without any unfavorable

consequences; but some physicians recommend sterilization after the third.

**Anesthesia and Pain.** A reliable obstetrician will do all in his power to make a woman as comfortable as possible during labor and delivery; but he cannot safely guarantee the complete absence of pain. To do so would mean the entailment of risk. To produce complete absence of pain the woman would have to be anesthetized to the point where her muscles would not react properly and she could not participate in the expulsion of the child. Obviously such a state of affairs would not be desirable. Excessive anesthesia may also injure the child.

The physician may, however, administer drugs that will reduce pain without producing general anesthesia. Such drugs are termed *analgesics* (pain removers). Some of these drugs also produce temporary amnesia (forgetfulness). The result is that the woman is in a semistupor. She is half-conscious and yet not alert. During uterine contractions she rouses sufficiently to participate. After the contractions she again lapses into drowsiness or sleep. During the delivery there is progressive forgetting, so that after the child is born she remembers little of what occurred. In the latter part of labor, when the child is sufficiently along in the birth canal to permit its birth without the full cooperation of the mother, an anesthetic may be administered. Exactly what drugs are to be used is a decision that must be made by the physician in each individual case on the basis of his knowledge of the individual woman. Generalization is impossible.

Even in cases in which no anesthetic or analgesic is employed and the birth occurs with none of the ameliorating benefits of modern medical science, the pain of childbirth is soon forgotten. It is difficult to remember any pain. One may remember his reactions to the pain but to recall the actual experience of pain is quite another matter. In the fascinating experience of seeing the newborn offspring, nursing it, caring for it, planning for it, the mother quickly forgets the inconvenience of pregnancy and the pain of labor. Many women plan for a second child before leaving the hospital with the first one.

The pain of childbirth should not be approached in the light of old wives' tales or in the light of the experience of an individual woman who happened to have a difficult labor. It should be

approached in the light of modern science and should be put into its correct perspective. The pain may be the most immediately obvious aspect of childbirth while the process is going on; but it is not the most important aspect. The important thing is that the woman has produced a new being, part of herself, part of her husband, a being to which she will become more closely attached than to any other individual except her husband. For her fiancé, one of her parents, her husband, a friend she would voluntarily suffer because the values involved would be greater than the discomfort. For her child, once born, she would suffer, die if need be. Even the father, whose relation to the child is less intimate, would willingly suffer for it or die to save it. Why then should she fear to suffer for her child for a period less than a day when her entire life and that of her husband will be made immeasurably richer by her experience; when that experience represents a step in the creative process by which she introduces into independent existence a creature uniquely her own? Furthermore, pain and risk are not necessarily correlated. The more the woman dissociates them in her thinking, the more readily she can face the pain.

Perhaps by reading between the lines of a few letters written by women still in the hospital after the birth of their babies we may gain some little insight into the relative values of joy and pain. These letters express not exceptional but typical attitudes. The women who wrote them give no indication of thinking of their recent experience as a forbidding descent into the valley of the shadow. The reason there are not more such documents is that few women write them. This makes it possible for the obstetrical details to seem amplified when compared with the rest of the experience. The women who wrote these did not know at the time that they would be read by anyone except the friends to whom they were addressed. Hence there was no reason for being anything except straightforward and sincere. There is no evidence of polishing the facts for publication. Personal details are omitted from this restatement; the rest is in their own words. Mrs. A. writes

At last the great "Johnnie" has arrived. Can you believe it? "He" is a lovely girl—nicer and sweeter than any other in the nursery. She is just too precious for words. I am so proud of her and you should see my husband; he just beams all over. It's just as if he had a halo around

his head. I love him so very much. Just wait until you fall in love and see what sensations and thrills really are. He and the baby are all my life now. I can hardly wait to get out to take care of them.

The hospital is lovely. I just lie here and push a button and my every wish is gratified. The nurses are wonderful and are so sweet and patient.

The baby weighed seven pounds, eleven and three-quarter ounces. She is still slightly pink but is toning down a bit. She is strong enough to hold her little head up and pushes away with her hands when they bring her to nurse. She honestly chews so hard I am sore; but that little mouth is so sweet I just love to have her touch me.

I guess I had a rather hard time with labor but my husband was with me until the last forty minutes. They would give me ether and then my husband would say, "Can you see me?" and I would answer, "Yes." Then the doctor would say, "Can you see *me*?" and I would say, "No." I can't remember that at all but they told me about it afterward. When I came to, I couldn't realize that it was all over and I had a daughter.

Mrs. B writes

First I must apologize for staying away from the nice dinner you prepared for us Sunday. I really intended to come but I had other very important business on Sunday.

Now I can get down to business and *rave*! That boy is simply marvelous and I can see a new life for —— (the husband) and me. It's even more wonderful than I thought it would be and you know I've been thrilled for nine months.

The baby looks like —— (husband)—has black hair, big feet and big hands—and is the sweetest baby in town. I'm so happy I have to cry a little every once in a while. It still seems too good to be true. I only hope that someday you will celebrate a blessed event. It's worth all the pain and all the sacrifice; it's wonderful. And Dr. —— is a great man and a great doctor. I almost felt like kissing him.

I am still on my back and writing is rather difficult. . . .

Mrs. C. writes

Your letter came this morning. Gee, but I'm happy. Now don't let me start raving over my boy. Did I ever say I wanted a girl?

Now I'll tell you about him this once and God forbid that I become one of those raving mothers. He's fat enough to be cute. His little cheeks hang over a bit. His blond hair is a bit mouse-colored but is going to curl. His hands and feet are exactly like ——'s (husband's); his ears and nose are mine; and the rest of him seems to be all his own. His nails were so long at first that he scratched his face; but now he has

had a manicure and only slaps his mother because she does not have enough to satisfy his appetite. Today I hope to accomplish that.

For the first two days I was a bit worried about his I.Q. They say a newborn baby knows only one thing and that is how to nurse. Well, he didn't even know that or at least he didn't give a care; but last night he learned his lesson and now the rest is up to me.

Miss —— is the old maid superintendent of the hospital. When I was starting into labor, she dropped in to see me. I asked her to tell me the proper technique for reacting to the pains in order to get maximum results. She just laughed and said, "Now that's a question to ask an old maid." I said, "I mean, theoretically." She did tell me very clearly just how one was supposed to do it. I followed it as nearly as I could and I know it hastened things.

The doctor was certainly pleased with the outcome. I think he was a bit worried. He wouldn't give enough dope to deaden a flea. Afterwards he said, "I knew you'd forgive me in the end." Just think—twenty-four hours after I saw you I was back in my room on an "ether jag" with an eight-pound baby in the nursery.

When you have your baby—wherever you go and whomever you have to deliver you—have confidence in your doctor. Forget every worry; that's half the battle. I may be insane but if that man said, "If I cut off your left ear, your eyesight will never dim," I'd believe him and say, "O.K., go ahead."

Here it is 10:20 and I have not finished the letter I started at the crack of dawn. There is certainly not a dull moment here.

**Lactation.** . For a brief period after the birth of the child the mother's breasts secrete *colostrum*, a substance that may have food value for the child and acts as a mild laxative but is not true milk. Colostrum is usually supplemented with water given by bottle. True milk appears in two to five days; and the child is nursed for about nine months if possible. Obstetricians agree that a mother should nurse her baby if there is any possibility of her doing so, provided that there are no ill effects for either mother or child. Many young mothers are reluctant to nurse the child because they fear permanent impairment of their appearance. This is not at all an inevitable result if the obstetrician's instructions are followed. Furthermore, a woman who has a baby has a responsibility as well as appearance to concern her. There is no other food so beneficial for a baby as its own mother's milk. Besides, the infant mortality rate is lower for breast-fed babies.

Contrary to common assumption, it is possible for a woman to become pregnant while nursing. Menstruation may start or conception may occur without the reinstitution of the menses. About one-half of all nursing mothers menstruate within three months after delivery; about four-fifths menstruate before the cessation of lactation.<sup>1</sup> The return of menses tends to be delayed by nursing, however. In a study of 2,885 patients of Johns Hopkins Hospital it was found that one-fourth of the white women and one-third of the Negro women became pregnant within twelve months after delivery. Of the whites, 36 per cent and of the Negroes 47 per cent were still nursing their babies when conception occurred.<sup>2</sup>

**Multiple Births.** What are a couple's chances of having twins or more than two babies at a single birth? The chances for twins are about 1 in 80, that is, 1 in 80 births is a twin birth. The chances for triplets are 1 in 6,400 ( $80^2$ ); for quadruplets, 1 in 520,000 ( $80^3$ ); for quintuplets, 1 in 41,600,000 ( $80^4$ ); for sextuplets, 1 in 3,328,000,000 ( $80^5$ ). There has never been an authentic report of the birth of septuplets (seven babies). Occasionally sextuplets are born. There are some 32 cases of quintuplets known.<sup>3</sup>

Twins are of two types: one-egg twins (uniovular; identical) and two-egg twins (binovular; fraternal). Identical twins are produced when the fertilized ovum breaks into two parts early in its development and each half develops into a complete fetus. Such twins are really parts of the same individual and resemble each other very closely. Sometimes they are identical in the sense of being alike. At other times they are mirror images of each other, for example, one twin's left hand will be like the other's right. When the separation of the parts of the fertilized ovum is incomplete, the "Siamese" type of twins results. Such twins are rare.

If a woman produces more than one ovum at a time, there is a possibility of two being fertilized and developing simultaneously. Such two-egg twins (fraternal twins) are no more closely related than any two children having the same parents. They may be of the same or of different sex. Identical twins are always of the

<sup>1</sup> SCHUMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

<sup>2</sup> GUTTMACHER, "Into This Universe," p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> SCHUMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

same sex. Identical twins have a common placenta but two amnions and two cords. Fraternal twins have two separate placentae, two amnions, and two cords. Fraternal twins seem to occur more frequently than the other type.

Whatever may be the cause of the production of more than one ovum at a time must of necessity be within the mother. But the factors causing the fertilized ovum to break into two parts, or perhaps we should say the factors that cause it to fail to hold together, may be carried by either egg or sperm. The individual children in a multiple pregnancy are each smaller than the child in a single pregnancy, but their combined weight is greater than that of the single child.

#### MATERNAL DEATH RATE

Much is written about the appalling maternal death rate in this country. Appalling it is. Each year, as a result of causes associated with childbirth, twelve to thirteen thousand women die. This is at the rate of one every thirty minutes. Within the last twenty-five years the number of maternal deaths has exceeded the number of soldiers who died in battle or as the result of wounds during the last 160 years of our history, including all wars from the Revolution to the First World War.<sup>1</sup> We have one of the highest maternal death rates in the civilized world.

This is cause for shame in a nation that boasts of its enlightenment, progress, scientific achievements, and unlimited resources. No one dares to gainsay the importance of the problem or underestimate the wanton waste of life represented by such statistics. The tragedy becomes more appalling when we realize that a large proportion, estimated by some as two-thirds, of these maternal deaths are preventable.

The individual woman taking such figures as they stand and supplementing them with the traditional dread of childbirth is likely to become unduly alarmed and to have her already existing fear accentuated. What the reader wants to know is expressed in the following questions. What is my risk in having a child? What is the risk for my wife? Is the risk as great as these figures seem to indicate? The answer is a definite and emphatic *No*.

<sup>1</sup> BABER, RAY E., "Marriage and the Family," p. 517, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1939.



In these figures there is no allowance for racial and class differences, no discrimination based upon type of care received during pregnancy and delivery, no account taken of previously existing diseases that might contribute to death. The assumption implied is that the risk is the same for one woman as for another. This is not true.

In 1934 the United States Department of Labor published a study of maternal mortality in fifteen representative states.<sup>1</sup> Because of the shifting and overlapping of categories, it is impossible on the basis of this report to summarize in one simple figure the risk for the individual mother. But by analyzing various parts of the study we shall see how the risk is reduced by cutting off a piece here and there, so to speak. The figures presented apply only to cases of death; they do not apply to all cases of delivery. In all, a total of 7,380 cases (6,072 white; 1,308 Negro) were included in the study. This represents approximately half the yearly maternal deaths. Thus percentages quoted may be applied roughly to the country as a whole, although the study was made in only fifteen states. The study revealed the following data.

1. The death rate was approximately twice as high for Negroes as for whites (white—57.5 per 10,000 live births; Negro—108.5). As the rate stands, bad as it is and with no allowance for qualifying circumstances, white women survive pregnancy and childbirth in 994 cases out of 1,000.

2. Out of 7,811 on whom data on this point were available, 184 (3 per cent) of the women who died had no medical attention from the beginning of pregnancy to death; 488 (7 per cent) had medical attention only when moribund, that is, when dying.

3. In 6,696 cases accessibility to a physician was reported. Only 3,956 (59 per cent) lived in the same town as the doctor. Of the remaining 2,740, 1,203 (44 per cent) lived 10 or more miles from a physician, 182 had the additional handicap of poor roads, which were practically impassable to automobile transportation; 309 lived 25 or more miles from a doctor, and 35 of these had poor roads.

4. For 5,636 there were reports on prenatal care. Of this number, 3,025 (54 per cent) had no prenatal examination by a physi-

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, "Maternal Mortality in Fifteen States," *Publication 223*, 1934. See also New York Academy of

cian and no prenatal advice; 1,337 (24 per cent) had poor prenatal care (examination and advice—not treatment); 499 (9 per cent) had indifferent care; 683 (12 per cent) had good care but not up to the highest standards; only 42 (less than 1 per cent) had prenatal care of a grade accepted as adequate according to standards set up by the United States Children's Bureau. Care of this last quality is "up to the standard that it is the right of every pregnant patient to have and to demand."

According to the report, such first-class care includes a careful medical, surgical, gynecological, and obstetrical history of the woman; a complete physical examination including heart, lungs, and abdomen; pelvic measurements both internal and external; a Wassermann test; blood counts; complete instruction in the hygiene of pregnancy; visits to the physician at least once a month for the first six months and then oftener as he advises, the first visit to occur not later than the end of the second month. At each visit the woman's general condition is to be investigated; blood pressure, urinalysis, and temperature recorded; weight ascertained if possible; abdominal examination made; position of uterus determined.

5. Of 4,965 cases in which the woman died after the sixth month of pregnancy, data were available in 4,903. Of these, 83 per cent were attended at delivery or death by physicians, internes, or medical students; 11 per cent were attended by midwives; 4 per cent, by nonmedical persons, such as relatives; 2 per cent were unattended.

Of these 4,965, 1,971 were in a hospital at the time of delivery or death; 2,990 were delivered, or died undelivered, out of a hospital. Of the 1,971, hospitalization was planned in advance for only 899. For 1,018 hospitalization was a last-minute emergency.

6. For 3,619 out of 4,305 cases in which the woman died after the sixth month of pregnancy, data were available concerning the attending physician's techniques. These data were based on the physicians' own statements after they were promised that whatever they revealed would be held secret as far as any individual was concerned. In 1,740 cases (48 per cent) the physi-

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Medicine, "Maternal Mortality in New York City," Commonwealth Fund, 1933, and Philadelphia County Medical Society, "Maternal Mortality in Philadelphia," 1934.

cian's technique was aseptic (germfree) and there was adequate assistance at delivery. In 510 (14 per cent) the physician's technique was described as "attempted aseptic," that is, he tried to make his technique germfree but failed. In 1,099 (30 per cent) it was clean but not sterile. In many of these cases the physician had been preceded by someone else whose technique was less careful. In 270 (7 per cent) there was not even ordinary cleanliness.

7. Data were available on the nursing care received by 778 women who died of infection during the last three months of pregnancy and were out of a hospital for at least part of their illness. Of these, only 32 had trained nurses; 17 had visiting nurses; 82, practical nurses; 62, midwives; 402, members of the family and other untrained persons; 183, no nursing care or very casual and unskilled care.

8. Of 4,066 women who died in hospitals only 2,338 were in hospitals approved by the American College of Surgeons. 3,726 were in hospitals registered by the American Medical Association; 333 were in unregistered hospitals. The American Medical Association refuses to register a hospital if there is evidence of irregular or unsafe practice and if the hospital is deemed unworthy of being included in a list of reputable institutions.

9. There were great differences in mortality rates in various age groups as follows. (The rate is the number per 10,000 live births.)

Age	All classes	White	Negro
Under 15 years	161	81	235
15 to 19	60	52	100
20 to 24	46	42	79*
25 to 29	52	48	95*
30 to 34	67	63	123
35 to 39	97	90	168
40 to 44	121	111	240
45 and over	203	195	254

\* Lowest rate was in this ten-year period

10. The rate was higher for unmarried than for married women. The reason for this is that unmarried mothers are more likely to receive poor care. This is shown, for example, in the number of cases of infection (puerperal septicemia). Of 6,850 married

women, 39 per cent died of infection; of 509 unmarried women, 51 per cent. Furthermore, only 10 per cent of the married were under twenty years of age, while 52 per cent of the single fell into that category.

11. In 7,234 cases, data on operative delivery were available. In 37 per cent there were operations (instrumental delivery being included as a type of operative delivery). Many of these operations were unwisely chosen and poorly executed. There were too many instances of forced labor. In about 40 per cent of the operative cases the physicians admitted that their techniques had been unsatisfactory with respect to asepsis.

12. About one-fourth of all the deaths followed abortions, abortion deaths being considered maternal deaths. Three-fourths of these abortion deaths were due to infection (puerperal septicemia). This three-fourths represented one-half of all deaths due to infection.

Of the abortions, 50 per cent were reported as induced; 37 per cent, as spontaneous (miscarriages), although some of these may have been induced, that fact being concealed; 13 per cent, as therapeutic (performed legally by a skilled surgeon). This is a greater indictment of induced abortion than appears at first glance, since in such abortion there are usually no complications and the only reason for the abortion is the woman's desire to rid herself of the fetus. In therapeutic abortion there is the risk of abortion as such, plus the complications that constitute the medical indication for the operation. Of the deaths following induced abortions, 91 per cent were due to infection; of those following spontaneous abortion, 60 per cent; of those following therapeutic abortion, 21 per cent. For every 10,000 live births by married mothers there were 14 deaths following abortion. For every 10,000 live births by unmarried mothers there were 50 such deaths. It is little wonder that abortion is considered a great killer.

Before attempting any conclusion let us approach the problem from another angle. The three most frequent causes of maternal death are infection (puerperal septicemia), toxic conditions (toxemia of late pregnancy), and hemorrhage (including placenta previa), in the order mentioned. Guttmacher reports<sup>1</sup> that, in a series of 27,484 women who received prenatal care through the

<sup>1</sup> GUTTMACHER, "Into This Universe," p. 303.

clinic at Johns Hopkins Hospital and were later delivered by members of the hospital staff, there were 29 deaths from puerperal fever (1 in 943 deliveries). Among 3,697 patients whose pregnancies were not adequately supervised and who were brought to the hospital in an emergency and as a last resort after treatment by midwives or poorly trained physicians, the ratio was 1 to 205. The rate for Negro women is higher than for whites; it is lower for private patients than for clinic patients. Clinic patients form a small proportion of the series mentioned. Hence, Guttmacher concludes that it is safe to assume that white women who are private patients of skilled obstetricians and receive expert care during pregnancy and delivery have a ratio of only one death due to infection in 2,000 or 2,500 cases. With the more widespread use of sulfanilamide and its derivatives we may expect even better results.

Severe toxemias of late pregnancy are said to occur about once in 500 cases.<sup>1</sup> In a well-run hospital the mortality rate should be under 10 per cent.<sup>2</sup> In many of these cases of death, previously existing heart, kidney, and similar disorders are contributing factors.

Hemorrhage following delivery occurs about once in 100 cases. In a survey of 95,000 births, fatal hemorrhage occurred about once in 2,900. It has been estimated that with skilled care the death rate from this cause can be kept to approximately one in 11,000.<sup>3</sup>

A distinction should be drawn between the *puerperal death rate*, that is, the death rate from all causes associated with pregnancy, and the *obstetrical death rate*, that is, the death rate from causes associated with childbirth proper. The obstetrical death rate is equal to the puerperal death rate minus the deaths from toxemias occurring early in pregnancy, from abortions, and from ectopic pregnancies (cases in which the fetus develops outside the uterus, usually in one of the Fallopian tubes). One reason for calling attention here to the need for this distinction is that the individual wants to know what her chances are when she is delivered, since she tends to think in terms of the birth process itself. The obstetrical death rate is approximately two-thirds of the puerperal death rate.

<sup>1</sup> SCHUMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 595.

From the discussion up to this point may be drawn the following conclusion with respect to the risk of childbirth to the individual woman. The chances of her dying as a result of causes directly associated with pregnancy and childbirth are practically nil (1) if she is white; (2) if she is married; (3) if she is between twenty and thirty years of age; (4) if she has no abortion or attempted abortion; (5) if she is under the care of a reliable, intelligent, well-trained, skilled obstetrician through her entire pregnancy and lives near enough to him to make frequent visits; (6) if she follows her obstetrician's instructions intelligently and faithfully; (7) if she is in good health at the time of becoming pregnant; (8) if she is delivered in a first-class hospital, which has facilities and personnel for adequate handling of obstetric cases—for obvious reasons, first-class hospital delivery is preferable to the best home delivery, but the best home delivery is preferable to hospital delivery of an inferior type; (9) if no unpredictable complications arise in the first few months of pregnancy.

If these conditions are fulfilled, a woman has nothing to fear. The birth of her baby will entail practically no risk.

There is an inevitable death rate, which catches up to each of us sooner or later. It overtakes some women during pregnancy and childbirth. There are accidents and complications, which may arise under the best circumstances and with the best care; they cannot be predicted. But this is true of life in general and for all people as well as for pregnant women. Some of the women who die as the result of causes associated with pregnancy and childbirth would have died anyway.

In 1935 there were 2,155,105 births and 1,392,752 deaths.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Americans are born at the rate of one every fifteen seconds and die at the rate of one every twenty-three seconds. All about us lurk subtle causes of death, prepared to pounce upon us at the slightest provocation. In 1935 almost 147,000 people died of infectious and parasitic diseases; 144,000, of cancers and tumors; 135,000, of diseases of the nervous system; 340,000, of diseases of the circulatory system; almost 119,000, of diseases of the respiratory system. In that year there were almost 129,000 violent and accidental deaths. More than 700 persons were killed by animals; over 700, by food poisoning; almost 1700, by gas; nearly 8,000, by fire; more than 7,000, by drowning;

<sup>1</sup> Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1937, p. 85.

2,800, by firearms; 24,000, by falls (many of them occurring in homes, such as falls from ladders, over rugs, downstairs); almost 400, by heat and 700, by cold; nearly 400 were killed by lightning; almost 700, by electric current. Automobile accidents accounted for more than 36,000. There were 18,000 suicides, more than 10,000 homicides.<sup>1</sup>

The point is this. In the face of such staggering statistics we continue to eat food; use gas and electricity; drive cars with gasoline engines; walk up and down stairs; keep pets and other domestic animals; associate with people who carry disease germs; walk about in our homes; swim; ride in automobiles; and do all the other dangerous things represented by these figures. Not only do we do them but we do them without developing unusual and abnormal fears in connection with them and without becoming nervous, worried, and apprehensive when the time for doing one of them arrives.

It is true, of course, that these causes of death apply to the entire population, while the causes of maternal deaths apply only to women who are pregnant. It is also true, however, that not all the causes of maternal deaths apply to the woman who fulfills the conditions we outlined above. Besides, causes of other deaths apply only intermittently in many instances; for example, there is no danger of death through automobile accident unless a person is in an automobile or is in a position to be struck by one. The causes of maternal death are present and potentially operative twenty-four hours per day for nine months. In a sense, the risk that a person assumes in exposing himself to the causes of death is greater than the raw figures seem to imply. If people rode in cars twenty-four hours per day each day of a nine-month period, the number of fatal accidents would be increased.

A person is not subject to death from a disease until he contracts the disease. He is not subject to death from accident unless he is subjected to the circumstances of the accident. The census figures give the total number of deaths from various causes in the general population but make no allowance for the fact that not all of the population were subjected to the possibility of death from these causes. The maternal mortality rate is based upon the number of women who gave birth to live babies and hence were subjected to the causes of maternal death. These

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of Census, *Mortality Statistics, 1935*, pp. 8, 14-17.

two pictures are in a way incomparable as they now stand. If it were possible to do so, the number of deaths from, say, automobile accident should be compared with the number of persons who ride in cars, and the same should be done with all causes of death. If this were done the risk involved in ordinary day-by-day living would seem even greater than it seems in the rough sketch we have drawn.

When all is said and done, taking into account all the chances and vicissitudes of living, the probability is that chance of death from causes due to pregnancy and childbirth is no greater than, if indeed it is as great as, the chance of succumbing to one of the other risks unavoidable in our particular type of life, taking these other risks as a whole and realizing that the individual is subject to some of them at every moment of the day and night. Yet, as has already been said, and may well be reemphasized, this total risk of living gives us relatively little concern. It mars our optimism and colors our outlook relatively little. Exercise of intelligence reduces risk.

Another point, too, will bear reemphasis. Pregnancy is not a disease. Women do not die as a result of pregnancy, strictly speaking. They die as a result of some disorder associated with pregnancy, something gone amiss with a natural, normal process. People do not die as a result of having digestion, circulation, respiration. They die when something interferes with the normal functioning of their organs. Function and dysfunction should be carefully distinguished in our thinking. Our attitudes toward normal functioning should not be colored by our attitudes toward the abnormal.



## CHAPTER XV

### INVOLUNTARY CHILDLESSNESS AND FAMILY PLANNING

The proportion of couples involuntarily childless is variously estimated by different investigators. Probably the proportion is at least 10 per cent. Their childlessness is due to some condition in the husband, in the wife, or in both. Often it is the result of several factors operating in conjunction.

Involuntary childlessness is commonly referred to as sterility. Actually, only part of the cases are due to this cause, if the term is used in the strict sense. It is better to speak of relative fertility and relative infertility. The population is not divided into two distinct groups one of which is fertile and can produce offspring and the other of which is sterile and cannot do so. The ability to produce offspring falls on the normal curve of variability, as do all human traits, and consequently ranges from very high fertility on the one hand to absolute sterility on the other.

Relative infertility may be temporary or permanent, remediable or irremediable. Many couples experience a brief period during which conception does not occur, for the average time elapsing between the wedding and the birth of the first child is some sixteen months. If both parties are in good health and there is no obvious reason why they should be infertile, a diagnosis of technical sterility is usually not made until at least two or three years have passed without the use of contraceptives.

#### FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INFERTILITY

Any condition that prevents the production of normal sperms or ova or that prevents sperm and ovum from meeting will produce infertility. We shall discuss briefly some of these conditions. Involuntary childlessness may also be the result of factors that produce spontaneous abortion.

**Chance.** It is conceivable that merely by chance no fertilization may occur over a considerable period. The effective life

of sperm and egg is so brief that their meeting must be accompanied by favorable circumstances and is possible during only a relatively brief portion of the menstrual cycle.

**Age.** The older a woman becomes, the less likely she is to become pregnant. She becomes pregnant most easily in her twenties, less easily in her thirties, still less easily in her forties. After the completion of the menopause pregnancy becomes impossible. Some women become pregnant after the menopause has begun and, in some cases, after menstruation has ceased. The reason for this is that ovulation may continue after the function of menstruation is lost. There is a common misconception to the effect that during the menopause impregnation becomes easier than earlier in life. The explanation is not that it is actually easier but probably that, menstruation having ceased, the woman concludes that ovulation has ceased and grows careless about the use of contraceptives. Saying that the older a woman becomes the more difficult it is for her to become pregnant is not the same as saying that the older she becomes the more difficult it is for her to have a child, meaning that labor is longer and delivery more trying. There may be some slight increasing difficulty with delivery as age increases, but this statement does not prove it. Many women have first babies in middle life, with no increase in either difficulty or risk.

**General Health.** Lowered vitality, shock, strain, change of mode of life, defective nutrition, anxiety, overfatigue, auto-intoxication, infection, vitamin deficiency, and defective metabolism may be contributing factors.

Cases are cited in which for some years a couple wanted a child but failed. At length they gave up hope of having one of their own and adopted one. Soon after the adoption, the wife became pregnant. In a study of 273 cases of adoption it was found that 200 of the women who had never been pregnant before had a child within an average of approximately thirty-nine months after adopting children and within about ten years after the wedding.<sup>1</sup> The explanation may be that the couple would have had a child anyway after some ten years of marriage.

<sup>1</sup> BROOKS, LEE, and EVELYN C. BROOKS, "Adventuring in Adoption," quoting H. F. Perkins, Adoption and Fertility, *Eugenical News*, Vol. 21, 1936, pp. 95-101.

Or it may be that during the period of childlessness anxiety increased with the passing years and adopting a child directed attention from infertility to the child. This decreased anxiety and made enough difference in the general physical and emotional condition of the couple to raise their relative fertility to the point where conception was possible.

**Germ Diseases.** Gonorrhea is the most frequent offender among the germ diseases, since it may kill the sperms or eggs or seal the Fallopian tubes. Second to gonorrhea, as far as male infertility is concerned, is mumps,<sup>1</sup> while tuberculosis is another common offender. Mumps seems to affect the fertility of women and the potential fertility of preadolescent male children relatively little. In adolescent boys and young men it may be very serious. Being a glandular infection, it may spread from one type of gland to another. If it spreads to the testes, infertility may result. A male individual of student age who contracts mumps should be under a doctor's care and should take every possible precaution to further recovery and prevent spread of the infection.

**Tumors.** A tumorous growth, not necessarily malignant, may obstruct passages and prevent the meeting of sperm and egg. If it is situated in the uterus, it may prevent the implantation of the fertilized ovum or disturb the growth of the fetus.

**X Ray and Radium.** X ray and radium in the hands of skilled experts are accompanied by very little or no danger of sterilization, unless repeated exposure of a type involving the pelvic organs, especially the ovaries or testes, is necessary. In inexpert or careless hands X rays or radium may contribute to sterility. Technicians are sometimes sterilized when they are careless about protecting themselves.

**Removal of the Genital Organs.** This obviously produces either sterility, if the organs be testes or ovaries, or the inability to have children, if, for example, the uterus is removed.

**Relatively Low Fertility in Both Spouses.** If neither husband nor wife is sterile but each is relatively infertile, they may be unable to have a child. In some cases such individuals have been divorced and then each remarried and had children with the second spouse. A combination of low fertility with low

<sup>1</sup> CURTIS, ARTHUR, "Textbook of Gynecology," p. 235, W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1930.

fertility produced childlessness. A combination of low with high fertility shifted the balance enough to make conception possible.

**Genetic Incompatability.** There is significance in the expression, "I haven't seen you in a dog's age," because of the definite span of life to which dogs are subject. Some insects live for only a few hours. Some animals live for more than a century. Man lives, if he is lucky, his three score and ten, or thereabouts. He never lives to be two or three hundred years old. Besides the influence of environment and the wear and tear on the bodily mechanism there seem to be factors carried in the genes that regulate the organism's life span. These are termed *lethal* (death-producing) *factors*. It is believed that in some individuals the germ cells carry unusual lethal factors, which either kill the egg at the time of fertilization or prevent its living very long afterward. It is also conceivable that egg and sperm both carry lethal factors which, when combined with each other, kill the new individual but, when combined with a normal egg or sperm, do not. This may explain some of the instances, such as those mentioned above, in which a couple could not have children together but each can have a child with a new spouse.

**Excessive Acidity of the Female Genital Tract.** This may result in the death of all sperms introduced. Normally the vaginal secretions are slightly acid and the seminal fluid is slightly alkaline; but sperms are killed by hyperacidity.

**Hormone Deficiency.** This may prevent the production of effective germ cells, as is shown clearly in cases in which infertility and obesity (excessive fatness) are associated. The fatness does not cause the infertility, or vice versa. Both are the result of a common cause, namely, the faulty functioning of one or more of the endocrine glands.

**Infantilism.** The genital organs may remain in a somewhat undeveloped state, so that effective germ cells are not produced. In the case of infantile female organs, the uterus may not be receptive to the implantation and development of the fetus.

**The Position of the Uterus.** Normally the uterus slopes forward at approximately a 45-degree angle. If the uterus is bent forward (anteflexion) or backward (retroflexion) as one might bend and crease a piece of rubber hose, or if the whole uterus is turned backward without bending (retroversion), this

condition may contribute to infertility by making it difficult for sperms to enter or for a fetus to develop to full term without aborting.

**A Tightly Closed Cervix.** This may contribute to infertility by making it difficult for sperms to enter the uterus. Incidentally, this is also a contributing factor in some cases of dysmenorrhea, and the dilation of the cervix may aid in remedying either or both conditions.

**Obstructions in the Cervix.** For example, adhesions following an infection or an operation, or excessive secretions of mucous, may prevent sperms from entering the uterus.

**Closed Fallopian Tubes.** Such closure prevents the ovum and sperm from meeting. An interesting test (*Rubin's test*) has been developed to determine whether the tubes are open or closed. This is termed testing the patency of the tubes. The test is based upon a principle similar to that of an automobile tire gauge. The gauge registers the number of pounds of pressure in the tire because there is back pressure through the tire valve. In Rubin's test, carbon dioxide under slight pressure is introduced into the Fallopian tubes. If the tubes are closed, a gauge records increased gas pressure. If they are open, the carbon dioxide passes through into the body cavity, where it is absorbed, no increase in pressure is recorded, and the passage of the gas may be heard through a stethoscope. Sometimes, if there is only an incomplete or slight obstruction in the tubes, the pressure of the gas used in the test is enough to open them and restore fertility. But gas under high pressure is no longer introduced into the tubes for this express purpose, since with too great pressure there is danger of the tubal wall's rupturing, with resulting infection, instead of the obstruction's giving way. In other tests to determine whether the tubes are open or closed, oil or some other liquid is used in place of gas and an X-ray photograph is taken to see how far along the tubes the liquid has passed.

**Malformation of the Genital Organs.** Such a condition may make insemination difficult or impossible.

**Impotence.** This is a condition in the male that makes him unable to perform the sexual act. It is often due to psychological rather than physical factors.

**The Production of Too Few or Defective Sperms.** In many cases microscopic examination of the sperms reveals defects or

numerical deficiency. Some defects are not so readily detectable and must be surmised. When there are fewer than 60,000,000 sperms per cubic centimeter of seminal fluid, relative infertility usually results.<sup>1</sup> Either the sperms may be produced in insufficient number to render the individual fertile or those produced may be unable to pass from the testes to the exterior because of some obstruction in one of the ducts.

It is variously estimated that factors in the husband contribute to involuntary childlessness or are the sole cause of the condition in 20 to 50 per cent of cases. The exact proportion is not so important as the fact that husbands are much more frequently at "fault" than they have known or have been willing to admit.

Through careful diagnosis by a medical expert the contributing factors in infertility may in many instances be discovered. Once these factors are discovered, remedy is possible in a large percentage of cases. The first step for the couple who want a baby and have been unsuccessful in having one is to visit a specialist, explain their situation and marital history, and follow his advice. If they are serious about wanting a child, he will suggest that they submit to a series of examinations and tests. The process may be long and perhaps expensive, depending upon the readiness with which causal factors are discovered and corrected. Complete cooperation of the couple—both of them—is essential.

With the ego that tradition has built up in many men and with their customary confusion of masculinity and fertility, some husbands feel insulted when it is suggested that they may be at fault. Some even object to examination and testing. Such behavior is absurdly juvenile, for a man cannot increase his fertility by refusing to measure it.

Many physicians suggest that the husband be tested first. The tests for him are easier of administration than those for the wife. If there are found in him factors that may contribute toward the couple's infertility, the physician may begin to remedy these and thus possibly save the couple much time and expense. The tests for the wife are more extensive and require more time. To start with her might involve a long and expensive procedure, only to find at last that the husband was at fault anyway.

<sup>1</sup> MEAKER, SAMUEL, "Human Sterility," p. 115, The Williams & Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1934.

## FAMILY PLANNING—THE SPACING OF CHILDREN

Most couples want children and, under favorable biological and economic circumstances, have them. In modern society, however, an increasing proportion of couples are learning how to regulate the number of their offspring and the time at which they are born, and thus the period which elapses between pregnancies. Ordinarily this process is designated *birth control*. The term has much in its favor, except that in some quarters people persist in misinterpreting it and reading into it connotations of abortion and sterilization. We must admit that abortion and sterilization are types of birth control; but as the term is commonly used these are not implied.

Another commonly employed term is *contraception*. Some have suggested as a substitute for *contraception* the term *pre-ventionception*, since it connotes the prevention of conception rather than something working against conception (contra-ception).

In this section we shall discuss contraception as a means of family planning. We shall neither discuss nor prescribe specific contraceptives. The prescription of contraceptives is a problem to be handled by physicians on a basis of individualized examination and needs. It is not something to be dealt with in a general discussion. No two couples are identical as to anatomy, attitudes, or goals. It is only on the basis of his knowledge of the particular couple that the physician may make adequate prescription of a contraceptive.

Unfortunately, not all physicians are prepared to handle this matter. Medical schools often do not give it much attention and many doctors have failed to keep abreast of new developments in the field. If anyone who wants information and advice cannot discover a physician qualified to give it, he may obtain suggestions as to physicians or clinics in a given community by writing to the American Birth Control League in New York City, the Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau in New York, or the birth control league of a particular state.

Contraception is any means employed to prevent conception, that is, to prevent the meeting of egg and sperm. This may be accomplished by keeping them apart with a mechanical barrier until sperms and egg die a natural death, by employing chemicals to kill the sperms, by refraining from coitus or engaging in it

only at certain periods so that sperms and egg eventually die either within or without the body in which they were produced. In any case the end result is the same, namely, sperms and egg die without producing a new individual. This is biologically, sociologically, philosophically, ethically, and legally different from abortion. In contraception there is no individual formed, hence none can be destroyed. In abortion a new individual is destroyed. As has been pointed out earlier in this chapter, where nature may use one cell (egg or sperm), she produces thousands, millions. Inevitably all but a few must die. Contraception is the destruction of some or all of those few. If nature sees fit to destroy millions, it seems a bit incongruous to condemn man for destroying a paltry handful.

Contraception does not necessarily imply that a couple will have no children. It implies only that they have the number they want when they want them, when they are ready for them, at sufficiently long intervals to permit the woman to maintain good health and to give birth to healthy babies. In short, contraception implies parenthood by choice rather than parenthood by chance.

One of the most frequently used arguments against contraception is that it is an interference with nature. We must grant that it is. Civilization is replete with means of interfering with nature, most of which we depend upon and take for granted in our day-by-day living. Pasteurization is interference with nature. The "natural" thing would be for babies to drink milk that contained germs and for a certain percentage of those babies to die of milk-borne disease. Vaccination is interference with nature. Surgery is. So are irrigation, artificial lighting, cooking, shaving, haircutting, permanent waves, and a thousand and one other things.

There is no virtue in quantity of children, as such. What we need is better children, not merely more children. Quantity is subject to control by natural processes. If numbers increase more rapidly than sustenance, factors such as disease, famine, war come into play to reduce quantity. Proponents of contraception maintain that it is better to prevent conception than to have a surplus of human beings destroyed after birth.

No farmer is accused of defeating nature because he does not raise every bit of one crop that his land will produce. He may



choose to raise less of one so that he may raise several and maintain a balance. Yet there are people who criticize couples for refusing to become one-crop producers. If a couple decide to regulate the quantity of one crop (children) so that they may have other things also (advantages for the children, a higher standard of living), they are often accused of defeating nature. Children nowadays, especially in cities, tend to be mouths to be fed rather than hands to work. They are supported by the parents over a longer period than formerly. Having all the children that nature provides may have been acceptable in earlier times, when many died in childhood and the survivors contributed to the family maintenance. Today, however, there are fewer infant deaths and the survivors become drains upon the family standard of living, rather than contributors to it.

The same natural processes that imbue man with reproductive powers also imbue him with intelligence. If he refuses to use his intelligence to improve his lot and that of his children on this increasingly restricted and crowded planet, he defeats nature as surely as when he controls conception. What is needed is neither wholesale recommendation nor wholesale condemnation, but rather intelligently controlled and applied knowledge for human betterment.

Many of the opponents of contraception assume that the chief purpose of sexual relations is reproduction. What has been said in an earlier chapter is repeated and reemphasized here. We know nothing about natural purposes; we know only functions. We cannot even agree that the chief function of human sexual activity is reproduction. Among animals it is; but among human beings reproduction is only one major function, the other being the enhancement of personality and the enrichment of life. Anyone must grant that the sexual urge is a powerful natural drive. Thus, sexual gratification is natural and continence is interference with nature. If the chief purpose of sexual activity is reproduction, as some maintain, why is sex one of the strongest impulses to which human beings are subject when reproduction occurs only a few times during one's life? Why is the sexual urge so omnipresent when procreation is so infrequent? The lower animals respond to sexual impulses in most cases only seasonally, when reproduction is possible. In human beings there is no seasonal drive. Furthermore, many women

experience strong sexual impulses just prior to menstruation, when conception is least likely to occur, or after the menopause, when conception is impossible. Another argument is that when a couple marry they should expect to assume the sometimes burdensome consequences as well as the pleasant satisfactions of their union. Such a point of view makes children seem like penalties resulting from an expression of devotion, rather than a means toward increasing it.

The attitude toward contraception found in some quarters is an example of cultural lag. There is also in this attitude an element of *neophobia*, or fear of the new. Most new developments, inventions, and discoveries are at first, and often for a considerable period, opposed or not accepted by a large proportion of the population. This is especially true when the new development can be interpreted as touching upon the mores, traditional ways, or religious beliefs. It is even more likely to be true when the end results of the new development cannot readily be measured and its advantages and disadvantages cannot readily be weighed and compared.

In 1825 a bill was introduced into the British Parliament opposing the construction of the first railroad. In the same year another bill was introduced opposing the use of steam power by the British navy. Sir Walter Scott considered the use of illuminating gas a "pestilential innovation." The bathtub, when it was introduced into this country in 1840, was considered by physicians to be dangerous to health. In 1845 in the city of Boston there was a municipal ordinance making the use of tubs unlawful unless prescribed by a physician.<sup>1</sup> In 1843 Philadelphia sought by municipal ordinance to prohibit all bathing between November 1 and March 15. About that time, bathtubs in Virginia were taxed \$30 per year. The first tub was installed in the White House in 1850 (ten years after the introduction of bathtubs). This remained the sole modern convenience of the sort until 1885. Not until the time of the Civil War could guests at larger Chicago hotels have much prospect of bathing in a modern manner. Not until after the Spanish-American War could guests have really private baths. Queen Elizabeth almost started a scandal when she had a bathtub built for herself,

<sup>1</sup> TOZZER, ALFRED MARSTON, "Social Origins and Social Continuities," p. 84, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1925.

"where," as a gossip sheet of the time put it, "she doth bathe herself once a month whether she require it or no."<sup>1</sup>

When vaccination for smallpox was introduced into this country in 1721, Dr. Boylston, who first innoculated his own son, was mobbed. Cotton Mather, who had suggested vaccination to Boylston, had a hand grenade thrown through his window. Some clergymen defended vaccination. Others preached against it, saying that it was an attempt by men to alter the course of nature.<sup>2</sup>

About the middle of the nineteenth century anesthesia to alleviate the pain of childbirth was first employed by a Dr. Simpson. Immediately a storm of protest arose. Objections were raised by clergymen, physicians, and laymen. Attempting to allay the pain of delivery was held to be contrary to the Scriptures and an interference with the decrees of Providence. Genesis 3: 16 was frequently quoted: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children. . . ." *Sorrow* was interpreted as *pain*. Anesthesia was held to be unnatural. One prominent Scottish physician wrote to Dr. Simpson, "I do not believe that anyone in Dublin has as yet used ether in midwifery: the feeling is very strong against its use in ordinary cases, and merely to avert the ordinary amount of pain which the Almighty has seen fit—and most wisely we cannot doubt—to allot to natural labour, and in this feeling I heartily and entirely concur." Simpson paraphrased the letter as follows, writing between the lines, "I do not believe that anyone in Dublin has as yet used a carriage in locomotion; the feeling is very strong against its use in ordinary progression, and merely to avert the ordinary amount of fatigue which the Almighty has seen fit—and most wisely we cannot doubt—to allot to natural walking, and in this feeling I heartily and entirely concur."<sup>3</sup>

When the Irish potato was introduced, Scottish clergymen preached against it because the Bible did not mention it. Yet they confused it with the forbidden fruit that had caused the fall

<sup>1</sup> *The Literary Digest*, Vol. 89, June 19, 1926, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> HAGGARD, HOWARD, "Devils, Drugs, and Doctors," p. 224, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1929.

<sup>3</sup> GUTTMACHER, ALAN FRANK, "Into This Universe," pp. 200-201, Viking Press, Inc., New York, 1937. Reprinted with permission.

of Adam.<sup>1</sup> Daylight-saving time came in for its share of opposition on the ground that it was an interference with nature and violated common sense and the Scriptures. The automobile was looked upon askance when it first appeared. Many thought it was only a passing fancy and would not long endure. Women's smoking is still subject to opposition. One might go on citing instance after instance in which the new is feared and opposed at first, only to be accepted in the end. With regard to contraception history is repeating itself.

**The "Safe Period."** The controversy over contraception centers about method rather than practice, means rather than end. Even the most ultraconservative and bitter opponents

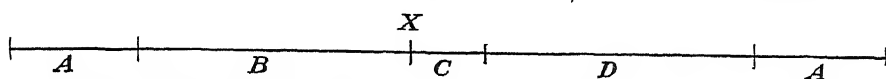


FIG. 13.—Phases of the menstrual cycle to show the so-called "safe period."

approve of continence and the "safe period." These are means of controlling conception, just as chemical and mechanical contraceptives are. The final result is the death of the sperms and ova with the former as with the latter methods.

It has been fairly well established that, on the average, ovulation occurs approximately in the middle of the menstrual cycle, although there is apparently considerable variation among women. Let us suppose that, in Fig. 13, A represents the period of menstruation proper (four to five days). At X ovulation occurs. The ovum lives during the brief period represented by C. Periods B and D, especially the latter, are periods during which there is no ovum to be fertilized, and consequently there can be no conception. These are presumably "safe periods." In common parlance "safe period" usually refers to D.

Theoretically, then, every woman has one or two "safe periods." The problem is to know when these occur. There are so many variables involved that determination is impossible with any constant degree of accuracy.

In the first place, advocates of the "safe period" assume that more is known about ovulation than actually is the case. On the average, ovulation does occur about the middle of the cycle, but it may occur at other times.

<sup>1</sup> TAYLOR, NORMAN, *The Potato*, *American Mercury*, Vol. 28, March, 1933, pp. 347-351.

The menstrual cycle may vary from month to month in a given woman. Even though she may keep a record for several months and may seem to be very regular, there is no way for her to know that she will be regular in the future. Dependence upon the "safe period" presumes the ability to predict the next menstruation. This cannot be done with any constant degree of accuracy.

No one knows precisely how long sperms and egg live and remain effective. Surely there is no way of determining this for a given woman each time there is a possibility of her becoming pregnant.

It is impossible to ascertain precisely how long it takes sperms to make their way to the ovum, since this may vary from time to time and depends in part upon anatomy and the vitality of the sperms.

Theoretically every woman has one or two "safe periods" but practically, because of the variables involved, the "safe period" is not entirely safe. We cannot, however, dismiss it arbitrarily. Further research may make dependence upon it more reliable. For couples whose religious scruples forbid the use of chemical or mechanical contraceptives, the "safe period" is the next best thing. If they choose to rely upon it, they should keep careful records of the woman's menstrual periods and then discuss the problem with a physician. They should not depend upon oversimplified printed tables or guidebooks.

In addition to the uncertainty of the method, there is another strong argument against relying upon the "safe period" to prevent conception. Relying upon the "safe period" means that the couple's sexual life is regulated by the probability of and avoidance of conception rather than by their mutual interest, love, affection, and desire. Furthermore, no woman can tell whether she has a "safe period" or when it occurs until she has experimented, and that involves the possibility of conception.

In the thinking of the persons who advocate this method but oppose the use of other means of contraception on the ground that the purpose of sexual relations is reproduction there appears to be an inconsistency. If the purpose of sex is reproduction, how can such persons sincerely advocate sexual union when no conception is probable?

**Requirements for Means of Contraception.** Whatever may be the means of contraception that a couple employ, it is essential that the chosen means shall fulfill the following requirements. (1) It should be relatively effective, that is, as effective as modern medical science can make it. No method is entirely foolproof. The methods most commonly recommended by informed physicians and reliable clinics, when used with intelligence and care, are nearly enough 100 per cent reliable to make possible the removal of all fear of unwanted pregnancy. (2) It should be relatively easy to use, simple, and readily understood. (3) It should be readily available and relatively inexpensive. (4) It should be aesthetically acceptable to both parties and repugnant to neither. (5) It should permit normal, satisfactory, successful sexual adjustment. (6) It should have no harmful results. The contraceptive should contain or entail no chemical or mechanical irritant that may give rise to infection or poisoning.

Many of the highly advertised and widely sold "feminine-hygiene" products are intended for contraceptives but are sold under another name to allow them to slip through the loopholes of the law. Many of these products are ineffective. Some are outright dangerous to health and life. A normal, healthy woman does not need "feminine hygiene" for cleanliness. Internal organs need no cleansing and external ones may be adequately cleansed with soap and water. Books of directions accompanying commercially sold "feminine-hygiene" products are oversimplified. They make insufficient allowance for individual variations in anatomy and sensitivity to chemicals. To rely upon them is about as sensible as to purchase eyeglasses from a mail-order house or in a five-and-ten-cent store. Contraceptives should be adapted to the individual couple by a reliable, well-informed physician upon the basis of his knowledge of the couple's anatomy and needs. They should not be used upon the recommendation of friends, drugstore clerks, or advertisements.

**Contraception and Social Change.** There is no longer any question as to whether we shall or shall not have, practice, or permit contraception. It is already here on a large scale. The problem is one of improving use and eliminating abuse. Contraception is very widespread among the educated and upper economic classes and is extending among all classes. Its con-

tinued advance depends upon deep-set economic forces. Once a people have discovered how to raise their standard of living by regulating the number of offspring, the extension of that knowledge is inevitable and irresistible. It can be slowed down by law and prejudice, but it cannot be halted. The question then becomes: Shall we or shall we not face the situation frankly? Shall we permit a wider use of contraception or shall we continue to force people to violate law and arbitrary moral restrictions in order to secure the information that they desire? Shall we make it possible for couples to get the best advice and assistance or drive them to rely upon nostrums? Shall we keep contraception in the dark, permitting it to breed all the festering, unpalatable excrescences of quackery, or bring it into the light? True it is that progress is being made and the law has been reinterpreted. In practically all states physicians may give contraceptive advice to their patients. But we still have far to go before we become a nation that regulates the production of human babies as efficiently and as effectively as it regulates the production and improvement of its livestock.

**Effects of Contraception.** One common argument against contraception is that the spread of knowledge in this field would lead inevitably to more widespread immorality. Anyone who propounds such an argument insults the intelligence of the American people. Most persons are moral because they want to be, not because they fear not to be. Young unmarried persons are not on the alert for opportunities to be immoral without unpleasant consequences. Some there are, of course, but these will be immoral anyway. The probable result, if reliable contraceptive knowledge were more widespread, would be that sincere young couples could marry at a more reasonable age and with their ordinarily low incomes, and neither subject themselves to fears of unwanted pregnancies before they were ready to have a family, nor have children before they were ready and thus start married life with a burden better postponed for a year or two. Knowledge of contraception also would probably encourage young couples to assume the responsibilities of marriage instead of entering, as some do, into irresponsible illicit relationships. More widespread knowledge of contraception would also decrease the number of abortions. It has been estimated on the basis of careful study that there are close to three-

quarters of a million abortions yearly in this country and that the number of abortion deaths is eight to ten thousand.<sup>1</sup> Earlier in this chapter it was noted that approximately one-fourth of the maternal deaths were recorded as due to abortion. The cause of many abortion deaths is concealed in order to permit the abortionist to escape the penalty of the law. In cases in which a woman dies as the result of illegal abortion and the abortionist is prosecuted, the death is classified as homicide. It has also been estimated that approximately 60 to 70 per cent of abortions are illegally induced (one-half by physicians, one-fifth by midwives, the rest by women themselves) and that about 90 per cent of the total number of abortions occur in married women.<sup>2</sup> There are, then, about one-third as many abortions as births. To put it another way, of every four children conceived, one dies or is killed before it reaches full term. This is an astonishing fact, comparable to infanticide among primitive peoples. It has been shown, too, that women with several children commit abortion more frequently than women pregnant for the first time.<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt that more widespread knowledge of contraception would reduce this incidence of fetal murder.

No proof has yet come forth to substantiate the common statement that contraception is injurious to health or life. Ill-chosen, unadvised methods may be. In one study of 12,500 cases there was found not a single instance of injury caused by the methods recommended by a reliable clinic.<sup>4</sup> There is one danger in the use of contraception, however. It is social rather than physiological. If a couple postpone having their family until they can better afford one, they may find that their standard of living rises as their income increases, and the difficulty of fitting a baby into their budget fails to wane. Add to this the probability of their forming habits of living that do not include offspring, and they may find it difficult ever voluntarily to decide to have children. Childless couples married several years often

<sup>1</sup> TAUSSIG, FREDERICK, "Abortions Spontaneous and Induced," pp. 24-28, The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1936.

<sup>2</sup> HIMES, NORMAN, and ABRAHAM STONE, "Practical Birth Control Methods," p. 157, Modern Age Books, Inc., New York, 1938.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>4</sup> YARROS, RACHELLE S., "Modern Woman and Sex," p. 147, Vanguard Press, Inc., New York, 1933.



say, "We wish we'd had an accident the first year we were married; then we wouldn't have the problem of making an almost impossible decision."

Another supposedly dangerous result of widespread contraceptive knowledge is that such knowledge makes it possible to "breed the brains out" of the population, since the upper economic classes have fewer children than the poor. A fallacy is involved in this argument, namely, that economic status and intelligence go hand in hand. This has not been proved. If we go back far enough into history, we find that most of our ancestors were poor. Poverty is something that subjects its unwilling adherents to the hopelessness of a vicious circle. In spite of America's being the much-heralded land of unlimited opportunity where every boy has an "equal" chance to become president, innumerable individuals are inextricably bound for life by environmental factors to the social level into which they were born. Even if we grant that the argument has some validity, we still must face the fact that forcing the upper classes, so-called, to have more children would not force the lower classes to have fewer. It would be better to make it possible for the lower classes to have fewer so that they may better their condition, and also to permit the upper classes to have more in proportion without increasing the actual number of their offspring.

**Reasons for Voluntary Childlessness.** The reasons why couples remain voluntarily childless, temporarily in most cases and permanently in relatively few, are more or less common knowledge. They may want a few years to become adjusted in marriage and to each other before complicating the situation with a child. They may feel that they cannot afford a baby. One or both may dislike children. They may feel self-sufficient and have no particular desire for children. The woman may not want to increase the amount of work she has to do. There may be worry over the training of the child and some hesitation to usher a child into a confused and chaotic world. One spouse may fear that a baby would usurp the other's affection and attention. The woman may be afraid that she will lose her beauty. Some women do, but this is not inevitable; and there are more factors involved than the simple fact of childbearing. The wife may dread childbirth or fear that pregnancy would impair her health. There is no foundation in fact for this latter

fear, since most women are benefited rather than injured by having a baby. The woman may be narcissistic, that is, she may love herself more than she loves anyone else. In rare cases, the couple hesitate to risk passing on known hereditary defects to the offspring. The couple, especially the woman, may not want to be "tied down" and have her freedom impaired by a baby. She forgets that many things we do have a debit side, which is ordinarily overlooked. She may feel that a child would interfere with her work outside the home.

**Effects of Childlessness.** Much is said and written about the effects of childlessness upon the couple concerned. Without doubt, children, when they are wanted, enrich marriage and a couple's life together. When they are not wanted, both parents and children are likely to suffer. The effects of being without them are relative to the personalities of the couple, their attitudes, desires, hopes, interests, and to whether or not they have compensatory experiences. No broad generalization to the effect that childlessness warps and distorts personality is warranted. In the case of some persons it does; in that of others it does not.

Unfortunately, there are persons who develop feelings of inferiority when they find that they must remain involuntarily childless because of some physiological dysfunction. There is no more logical reason for feeling inferior because of low fertility than there is for feeling inferior because one has blue eyes, large feet, small ears, high blood pressure or any other physical condition over which one has no control. People feel inferior with respect to physical traits because they tend to think of the normal as a straight line below which they fall, instead of thinking of the normal as variation that may be represented by a curve. A certain amount of infertility is to be expected, just as a certain amount of singleness, shortness, tallness is to be expected. If a couple are relatively infertile and have done all that medical science can offer to correct their condition, with no favorable results, this makes their condition one of the inevitables in life. The mature thing is to accept it with poise. If they really want a baby for the sake of having a baby rather than to prove their fertility, they may adopt one.

**Effects of Having Children.** Children are not always an unmixed blessing. No enterprise produces profits without time,

effort, management, and the investment of capital. If a couple buy a car, they are subjected to a certain amount of economic limitation. If they purchase a home, there is definite economic restriction and considerable responsibility. Homeowners are not so free to move about as are renters. Usually owners assume more responsibility for community betterment. One's occupation, friends, relatives, marriage itself, even pets impose some restrictions and limitations, as well as affording pleasure and satisfaction. Yet we do not voluntarily relinquish or avoid them, for we know that the inherent values outweigh the cost. The same is true of a baby.

One has only to note the enthusiasm and pride of a couple who have but recently attained the status of parenthood to realize the truth of this statement. One has merely to notice the expanded chests of fathers and the sparkling eyes of mothers at a child's college commencement or wedding or after the birth of a grandchild to realize that the profits on the investment extend throughout life. Naturally some enterprises fail; that is to be expected.

A couple with their first baby give the impression that they are having an experience that they consider unique, and indeed for them it is. Children may enrich life in a way that nothing else can. They are so completely a couple's own, so entirely a possession in common. They afford such free opportunity for sharing. They are also a test of adjustability, with love growing stronger as the test is passed. Since they are so lovable and so readily return affection, children offer unusual opportunity for intimate response. They are a continuously new experience. Watching children grow and playing a part in their development is creative in the best sense of the word. In their children a couple may relive their own youth and vicariously satisfy some of the yearnings that have gone unsatisfied for years. Children give life new meaning, a new focal point, a new frame of reference, and a new perspective.

A couple also derive satisfaction from a child's dependence upon them. There is reason to believe that it is this dependence more than the fact of biological reproduction that binds parents and child so closely together. It is not unusual for a mother to say that immediately after delivery she felt no particular love for her child. As soon as she began to handle it, nurse it, care

for it, love rapidly became manifest. Parents also derive satisfaction from the feeling that they are among the most essential elements in the child's world.

Children present an almost unequalled opportunity for giving and for self-abnegation, for "losing one's life to find it"—which, though talked about to the point of triteness, is one of the surest roads to happiness. A woman especially finds pleasure in thinking of the child as part of the husband whom she loves and to whom she may present offspring. Finally there is the companionship that children afford all through life but particularly in older age, a companionship that has the faculty of exerting its influence even though parent and child may be separated geographically. But the child should not be considered as investment in old-age insurance—"We support you now; you support us later."

Some women have strong curiosity about the birth experience. This cannot be completely satisfied through observation. A woman may feel that unless she has a child of her own she will miss one of the great experiences of life. Children also carry on the name and become heirs to property, a fact that is deemed important by some persons, for it affords a type of "immortality" that presents a certain appeal.

Many reasons commonly suggested why couples *should* have children are either unsound or ineffective, because they do not touch upon motivations. One argument is that a woman needs a child to "complete" her life. If the word *complete* connotes what we have just said about enrichment of life, we may agree that a child contributes to that enrichment. That is not the same as saying that a woman's life is incomplete in the sense of frustrating one of her powerful "instinctive" drives. There is no evidence that women have a maternal instinct in the sense of having a strong instinctive desire for motherhood. Some women do exhibit the desire; but there is reason to suppose that it is the result of experience. Men, too, want children but no one holds any brief for a paternal instinct.

Another common argument is to the effect that it is selfish to be childless. So it is. If, however, a couple have children because they love them and want them, then having them is selfish too. Surely one cannot hold that a couple have an unselfish and altruistic desire to enhance the welfare of an individual

not yet conceived, as would necessarily be the case if they were to have a child for unselfish reasons. There are also instances in which the motives underlying childlessness are clearly unselfish; for example, if the parents carry hereditary defects or feel that they could not give a child the advantages he would deserve.

Some argue that a couple should have children because of a duty to society. The argument is that, since each individual was born, he owes society a debt, which he can pay only by making a contribution to the personnel of the next generation. This argument would carry weight only if individuals asked to be born. People do not have children for the sake of posterity, the race, eugenics, the falling birth rate, or the differential birth rate. They have children for selfish reasons or by accident. This is not to be interpreted as meaning that a eugenics program is unimportant or that the welfare of the race should have no part in an individual's marital choices or his having or not having children. It is merely facing the facts. To increase the birth rate and readjust the differential rate, couples must be made aware of the satisfactions inherent in having children, and their economic status must be readjusted so that having families is feasible. To improve the quality of the population, couples must be made aware of the joys of having sound and superior children and the problems and grief of having defective ones. The welfare of the race is an outgrowth of the welfare of the individual. The former is not something to which the latter is to be subjected when the benefits to the individual are not clear and the benefits to posterity seem to him to supersede his own happiness.

#### ADOPTION

It is estimated that there are no fewer than sixteen to seventeen thousand adoptions yearly in this country.<sup>1</sup> This number includes adoption of children by relatives. Agencies find that the demand for babies exceeds the supply. Many of the better agencies have long waiting lists. Often a couple must wait a year or more after making an application before receiving an infant. Older children are less in demand and easier to obtain.

<sup>1</sup> "Social Work Year Book," 1937, p. 23, Russell Sage Foundation, New York.

Adoption is no longer considered an act of charity through which a homeless, helpless child is given maintenance. It is deemed a privilege for the foster parents as well as the child. The future welfare and adjustment of all concerned is taken into consideration. Not only is the child chosen; the foster home and parents also are chosen. The staffs in the better agencies insist upon meeting the prospective foster parents, investigating their social and economic position, and sending a special investigator to see the home and talk with friends. In this way adults and child are "fitted" to each other. Race, religion, intelligence, nationality, education, cultural background of natural and of adoptive parents are matched insofar as this is possible. So carefully is this done in some cases that the child actually looks like the new parents and could easily pass as their own offspring.

Usually the agency collects all available facts pertaining to the child's background. These are kept on file. Some agencies reveal as much as the foster parents wish to know. Others hold that the less the new parents know the better off both the child and they will be, since knowing the child's background may lead them to "read into" his behavior something that is there only in their own imagination. In general, trusting the staff of a reliable agency is a better safeguard than knowing the necessarily incomplete data on the child's origin. The identity of natural parents is usually not revealed to foster parents, and vice versa. Hence there is very little chance of the former's appearing at an inopportune time, to upset the child's adjustment. When the baby is left with the agency, all claim to it is relinquished.

No defective child is offered for adoption without the prospective parents' being apprised of the defects. They are not obliged to accept the baby if they do not want it. In the better agencies all children remain in a temporary home for observation, medical attention, and testing for at least a brief period before being placed.

When the child is taken by the prospective foster parents, it is on probation, so to speak, for a time—from several months to a year. If during this period before the final papers have been signed it develops any defects not observable in infancy, it may be returned to the agency. Few babies are returned, since many defects may be observed very early in life and there is but slight chance of others' developing. A couple who adopt a child run

very slight risk of receiving one who is defective—certainly no more risk than in having one of their own, and probably less. When they adopt a baby, they can at least see what they are getting.

Experience proves that adopted children love and are loved as much as natural ones. The real parents, if anything is known about them, are strangers; if nothing is known of them, they are just words and a source of mild curiosity.

In the rearing of the child, his adoption should be made a natural part of his life, something that he takes for granted. He should be told of it as soon as he is able to understand. He should not, however, be reminded of it in a disparaging way. No gratitude should be demanded and his shortcomings should never be blamed on the fact of adoption. Some foster parents speak of their "adopted child" or "chosen child." In this way the child grows up with the idea of adoption accepted casually and without shock. Cases are known in which a child has boasted to his playmates, "I was chosen because my parents loved me, but yours had to take you."

When the child is reared believing that he is his foster parents' natural offspring and then, when partly grown, learns about his adoption, he may experience a shock that will shake the foundations of his personality. This is especially likely to happen when he acquires the facts indirectly, suddenly, and without preparation. His world collapses. Things he thought most secure become insecure. He is forced to readjust his whole point of view and outlook upon life. He is not the person he thought he was. He may begin to feel inferior or become cynical and pessimistic.

Let us imagine a person of college student age who was adopted but did not learn about it until adolescence or later. The open wounds or scars of shock are still observable. What may he do? He is not changed by the knowledge that he was adopted. He should be flattered that his foster parents were sufficiently eager to have a child and that he was so attractive to them that they voluntarily chose him and devoted themselves to him. A person feels no inferiority because of having been chosen to become husband or wife instead of being born to this status. In fact, by most people the marital relationship is held in greater esteem than consanguinity (blood relationship). The adopted youth

should be gratified that he has brought his foster parents happiness. In many ways, life does not depend so much upon biological relationships as it does upon those that are personal and social. Although one's biological relationship to foster parents is not what it is to his natural parents, the other relationships are the same with the former as they would have been with the latter. There is no need for the adopted child to worry about his background, for he would probably not have been chosen had there been any apparent defect. As far as his carrying possible hereditary defects is concerned, he may rest assured that he knows only slightly less about his ancestry than he would know if he were acquainted with his parents and grandparents. We inherit from all our ancestors. Yet few of us know more than a handful of related persons from the two or three most recent generations.



## CHAPTER XVI

### DIVORCE

The reader may wonder why a chapter on divorce is included in a book on preparation for marriage. The answer is not that divorce is the last step in a chronological sequence, as some facetious observers assume when perusing the table of contents. The reasons for including the subject are these. Our collective attitude toward divorce plays a part in determining our attitude toward marriage. Divorce is in the news. There are common misconceptions and examples of misplaced emphasis, which may well be discussed. Many individuals come into contact with divorce through the marital affairs of friends and relatives.

**Definition.** Divorce is the legal severing of marriage ties which a court recognizes as having existed. The parties formerly married become ex-spouses, just as the widowed do. In divorce, a bona fide marriage is terminated. Divorce and annulment are not identical. In the latter the court declares a supposed marriage null and void, that is, the court officially recognizes that no marriage existed, although the couple or one of the two thought that it did. After annulment the couple are as they were before their "wedding," since they have never really been married. They are not "ex-spouses."

#### DATA ON DIVORCE

**Rate.** The rapid rise of the American divorce rate is one of the outstanding phenomena of our recent history. The rate may be stated in various ways, one of the commonest being the ratio of divorces to marriages in a given year. In 1870 there was one divorce for approximately every thirty-four marriages. In 1900 the ratio was one to approximately twelve.<sup>1</sup> By 1930 it had become one to about six. At present it is one to less than six. This is not quite equivalent to saying that one in six marriages

<sup>1</sup> LICHTENBERGER, J. P., "Divorce, a Social Interpretation," p. 152, Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1931.

ends in the divorce court, since the divorces granted in a given year represent the termination of marriages that, as a rule, occurred before that year. To compare the divorces in a given year with the marriages in the same year is not quite accurate, but it is nearly enough so for our purposes.

Another way of looking at the rate is this. From 1887 to 1931 the population increased 211 per cent, the number of marriages 211 per cent, the number of divorces 610 per cent.<sup>1</sup> Still another method is to compare the number of divorces in a given year with the total number of existing marriages. Since there are, roughly, twenty-five million married couples and approximately two hundred to two hundred-fifty thousand divorces, we see that in a given year only one in 100 to 125 existing marriages ends in divorce.

The rate is not uniform throughout the country, nor in all economic classes. It is higher in cities than in rural areas, probably because of the weakening of primary group control in the former and also because of the type of persons who tend to gravitate toward the city, where control is weakened. The rate is highest on the Pacific Coast, lowest in the Middle and South Atlantic states.<sup>2</sup> There is some evidence for believing that the rate may be higher than statistics indicate, since not all divorces are reported.

Much is said and written about Reno and Hollywood divorces. There is no gainsaying the fact that Reno is a divorce mill. Nevada laws permit divorce after only a very brief period of residence; and the city of Reno has made divorce its chief industry. The streets are lined with bars and gambling houses established to help the prospective divorcés forget their troubles. Both in and about the city are places of temporary residence, from tourist camps to dude ranches. Reno is a haven for decree seekers of the upper economic levels. To live there for six weeks and pay the attorneys' fees and other costs is expensive. Reno flashes many a notorious and spectacular name through the channels of the news. As a result, it has come to symbolize American divorce. The symbol is inept, and Reno has been overrated. Even with its large and well-publicized divorce

<sup>1</sup> NIMKOFF, M. F., "The Family," p. 436, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of Census, Marriage and Divorce, 1932, p. 2.

business, divorces granted there number less than one in forty.<sup>1</sup>

Hollywood divorces also tend to make the news and they, too, are overrated. The rate for motion-picture actors is approximately the same as that for Los Angeles County as a whole. In Los Angeles County there are about two divorces for every five marriages.<sup>2</sup> In a study of 400 top Hollywood names (because a few are included in two connections, the statistical total is 405) the following facts were found. Of the 405, 91 have never married; 313 have. Of the latter, 221 (71 per cent) have been married only once; 176 (56 per cent) still have their first mates. Of the 313, 92 (29 per cent) have been married more than once; 24 (8 per cent) have been married more than twice; 5 (1.5 per cent) have been married four or more times. Of the 313 players who have married, 2 out of 5 have had divorces. Many of these divorces occurred before the individuals joined the motion-picture colony.<sup>3</sup>

The rate varies according to economic class, because divorces cost money. The poor man resorts to desertion. In fact, desertion has been called the "poor man's divorce," although the description is not quite accurate, since many desertions are temporary.

The divorce rate is not the same as the number of divorced persons in the population. Of the total population fifteen years of age or older, a little more than 1 per cent were divorced in 1930, as compared with 0.5 per cent in 1910.<sup>4</sup>

A person is not permitted to have more than one spouse at a time, but he is permitted to have any number in succession, provided that the requirements of the law are met. MARRIAGE CHAMP SAYS SHE'S WIFE NUMBER FIFTEEN; SEVENTY-EIGHT AND MARRIED SIX TIMES, SHE WEDS EIGHTY, WHO HAS WEDDED SEVEN; BLONDE REVEALS TEN MARRIAGES; THESE SIX WOMEN HAVE HAD FORTY HUSBANDS; WIVES ARE HIS HOBBY—HAS HAD FOURTEEN—these are headlines of a type not infrequently encountered in newspapers and picture magazines. Ostensi-

<sup>1</sup> NIMKOFF, *op. cit.*, p. 440; and FOLSOM, JOSEPH KIRK, "The Family," pp. 379-380, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of Census, Marriage and Divorce, 1932, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Motion Picture*, Vol. 55, No. 3, April, 1938, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census, 1930, Population, II, p. 837.

bly, our mores uphold strict monogamy. Marital records like these and others less pretentious reflect a loophole in the mores permitting what might be termed *serial* or *progressive polygamy*.

**Divorce Rate and Extent of Failure.** The divorce rate, high as it is, does not present an accurate picture of marriage failure. Many couples separate without divorce, and many others continue to live together even though their marriage has become no more than the legal ashes of a once flourishing relationship. Thus marital failure is more common than one case in six. Since in each case of failure at least two persons are affected, the total number whose lives have been colored by unsuccessful marriage would be appalling if it could be ascertained. This is not cause for pessimism, however; it is only an indication of the need for better preparation.

There are numerous reasons why a couple may refrain from divorce when a marriage has failed. (1) They may remain together for the sake of the children. (2) There may be property considerations. (3) The husband's business or professional standing might be jeopardized by divorce. (4) There may be a desire on the part of each not to hurt the other. (5) The divorce may be desired by only one spouse, but he may have no grounds. (6) Habit patterns may be too deeply entrenched. There is the memory of their earlier life together. There may be common interests and common responsibilities. (7) The couple may have the hope that their marriage will be readjusted. (8) They may have the attitude of having made a bargain and holding to it. (9) The woman may remain in an unhappy relationship for the sake of support. (10) There may be moral or religious reasons. (11) There may be love, in spite of their inability to live happily together. (12) They may live in a state that does not permit divorce on any ground, or on any to which they could or would resort.

There is a common assumption that the increasing divorce rate actually indicates that more marriages are failing. This is not necessarily true. No one knows how many marriages are unsuccessful today as compared with years ago. Standards were different then. Expectations for husbands and wives were different. Roles were different. Another reason for the assumption that the marital situation is growing worse is that stability

is considered a more reliable criterion of judgment than happiness and freedom. Stability is only easier to measure. Although instability may mean unhappiness, stability does not necessarily mean the opposite.

There are more appendectomies today than there were fifty years ago, but this does not prove that there is more appendicitis or that the health situation is growing worse. It shows only that more cases of appendicitis are diagnosed as such and that there are more operations performed to relieve symptoms and save patients from peritonitis. Because a man remains at the same job for life does not prove that he is satisfied, successful, or happy in it. It may prove only that he has found no way of changing his vocation. Suppose, for illustration, that two college roommates are locked in a room. They quarrel. The fact that they do not leave the room is not a test of their friendship. In earlier days there was little for a couple to do about their unsuccessful marriage but grin and bear it. Public opinion frowned upon divorce, and there were few ways for the wife to support herself if she left her husband.

South Carolina does not permit divorce on any ground. If the legislature of that state were to enact a law permitting divorce for any of several reasons, the divorce rate in South Carolina would rise. That would not prove that the proportion of unsuccessful marriages in that state had risen.<sup>1</sup>

In short, the increasing divorce rate proves only that more couples are escaping from marriages which to them have become intolerable. Modern social conditions have opened the doors of escape and more couples are passing through them. However, the fact that the doors are open does not create the desire to pass through them.

When a careful observer compares a group of unsuccessful marriages in which there is no divorce with a group ending in divorce, he finds that all the elements characteristic of the latter are to be found in the former, with one exception, namely, the willingness to terminate the marriage in court. Some marriages seem to hold together in spite of elements contributing to failure, because the couple are not willing to resort to escape. How, then, can anyone determine how much marital failure there is today as compared with, say, fifty years ago?

<sup>1</sup> LICHTENBERGER, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

Divorce is a symptom or an effect of failure. It is not a cause. Couples resort to the courts only after their marriages have disintegrated. In some cases divorce is a secondary, rather than a primary, effect of maladjustment. For instance, a marriage is unsuccessful because the couple are incompatible. This incompatibility leads the husband to infidelity. The divorce is sought on the basis of adultery.

In considering marriage, we are inclined to do something that we avoid in connection with most other human endeavors. We make the broad assumption and postulate the universal expectation that all marriages should succeed. When some fail, we are surprised and conclude that the institution of marriage is disintegrating. It is in a state of transition but it is not, therefore, breaking down.

This assumption of success is desirable when the individual couple contemplate the future of their own marriage. They should enter it confident that it will be successful and will endure for life. In looking at all marriages taken as a group, however, the prognosis is variation rather than uniformity.

Most human endeavors and characteristics fall upon a normal curve of variability rather than upon a straight line or a fixed point. In college some students fail, others pass with honors, the majority fall in between the extremes. In spite of the best preparation, individuals fail in their chosen vocations, and many never pass beyond mediocrity. Marriage is no exception to the general rule. Of the marriages contracted in any given year a certain proportion may be expected to fail, a large number will be relatively successful, some will be outstanding. Because one in six ends in the divorce court, we must not lose sight of the fact that five in six do not.

#### SOCIAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS OF DIVORCE

**Is Divorce a Social Evil?** Whether or not we decide that divorce is a social evil depends upon the definition given for the term *evil*. If it means something regrettable and to be prevented if possible, then divorce is evil. If, however, *evil* is interpreted as meaning something conducive to disintegration and destruction, then divorce is not such. As we have said, divorce is symptom and effect, not cause. Like a surgical operation, it may be the only means by which a life can be saved from insidious

disease. Surgery is regrettable; people would be happier if no one ever had to submit to the knife. This does not make surgery an evil. It makes it only something that indicates an underlying evil. Divorce seems to be an evil to the degree to which we fail to think of expectancy of marital success in terms of the normal curve of variability.

**Factors Affecting the Rate.** As has been already implied, the factors affecting the divorce rate are not necessarily the same ones that contribute to marital failure, since divorce is merely the opening of the doors of escape from failure. We have said that divorce is a symptom of failure in the individual marriage. The increasing rate is also a symptom of social change. We shall mention only briefly some of the elements in the social situation that may contribute to the rising rate.

*A Higher Standard of Living.* As the standard of living rises, more people have financial resources sufficient to bear the expense of divorce.

*The Reduction in the Institutional Functions of the Family.* A husband or a wife is no longer the economic necessity of earlier days. Protection has in part been taken over by the state. Provision for old age rests less upon family and more upon outside agencies. Education is controlled by the state, and a child's formal education is the same, whether he has one parent or two.

*The Higher Status of Women.* Women have greater freedom of choice and action, including greater opportunity for self-support.

*New Standards of Marital Success and New Ideals of Married Life.* These new standards and ideals place greater emphasis on personal relations, such as love and companionship. When these are not afforded by a marriage, their absence is deemed adequate excuse for escape.

*A Decline of Religious Authority.* Marriages contracted with a civil ceremony are more likely to end in divorce than those contracted with a religious ceremony. This does not mean that an irreligious couple could increase the probability of their marital success by having a minister marry them. The type of ceremony is significant only to the degree to which it reflects the attitudes of the parties to the union.<sup>1</sup> Those more deeply

<sup>1</sup> HART, HORNEILL, and ELLA B. HART, "Personality and the Family," p. 113, D. C. Heath & Company, Boston, 1935.

affected by the decline of religious authority are less likely to succeed, or, at any rate, are more likely to divorce.

*More Widespread Liberalism in Thought.* Public opinion toward divorce has changed. The divorcé is no longer considered an individual with a shady past or a doubtful character. People do not look askance at divorce as they used to.

*Changed Ideas of Masculine Supremacy.* Women are freer to insist upon their rights and more successful in achieving them. "Love, honor, and obey" has been changed to "love, honor, and cherish" in the typical wedding ceremony. In name only and when the census taker calls is the husband the head of the house. In earlier times, the family had one head; nowadays, it tends to have none or two.

*The Growth of Cities Has Broken Down Primary Group Control.* In the face-to-face groups of rural areas each individual feels called upon to keep his neighbor on the right track or, at best, to inform the community of his activities. In the city there is more freedom and less interference.

*Divorce Has Become Easier to Obtain.* Courts have become more lenient toward divorce. Grounds for action have been multiplied. Laws dealing with the matter have been reinterpreted.

*Divorce Is Exploited in the Press.* The fact that escape from an unhappy marriage is possible, even easy, is flaunted in the face of the public. However, the fact that divorce is still news is hopeful. It shows that, in spite of our frequent misconceptions, stable marriage rather than divorce is the norm.

*The Death Rate Has Declined.* The fact that the death rate has declined indicates that some marriages that might have been broken by death end in divorce.

*Tendency to Cast a False Glamour around Divorce.* We speak of the "gay divorcée." She is pictured as a woman of experience, subtlety, and wiles. Actually, there is no glamour to divorce. We have been gullible enough to accept at its face value the false front of self-defense put on by some divorced persons who wish to forget their tribulations or avoid the adverse opinion of associates. We have also tended to generalize on the occasional shallow individual whose lack of depth makes him seem superficially happy in a situation that would cause a less frothy one pain and regret.



In the typical divorce case there are two persons whose dreams have fallen in ruins. They have tried again and again after bitter disillusionment and disappointment to readjust their marriage, only to fail. They have put off the final irrevocable step until they could no longer tolerate their position. They have become progressively resigned to what seemed like an inevitable finale or have hoped against hope that by some miracle their marriage would be saved. At long last they face the embarrassment and humiliation of a court trial, make accusations and recriminations, air their private affairs before outsiders. Then, after the decree, when they had thought everything would be rosy, they face a long and trying period of readjustment. *Glamorous* is the last word that one would attach to such persons and events.

**Who Get Divorces?** At the beginning of this century approximately two-thirds of the divorces were granted to wives. Today the proportion has risen to approximately three-fourths.<sup>1</sup> This shift is in keeping with the trend of the times.

A number of possible reasons may be given to explain why more wives than husbands are plaintiffs in divorce cases. (1) In some respects women have more at stake in marriage than do men. They are thus more inclined to feel the sting of failure. (2) There is still enough chivalry in the relationships of the sexes so that, when a couple mutually agree to get a divorce, the husband assumes the blame and lets the wife bring suit. (3) More grounds are available to women in some states. For example, the ground of nonsupport is seldom used by husbands. (4) Courts tend on the whole to be more sympathetic with women than with men. (5) If the couple agree upon alimony, the court will more readily stipulate it if the wife is the plaintiff. (6) It may still be somewhat easier for a man to face public opinion. (7) Women have greater freedom in seeking divorce now than formerly and are using this freedom. (8) Men have more contact with the world outside the home and may have more frequent opportunity for infidelity. (9) It is easier for women to go away for a period, say, to Reno, while men's occupational responsibilities tend to necessitate their remaining at home. (10) This is an era of traveling men, and statistics show that men who spend much time away from home are more likely to be divorced than those whose occupations permit more home life.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> U. S. Bureau of Census, *Marriage and Divorce*, 1931, p. 17; 1932, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> HART, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

**Duration of Marriage with Relation to Divorce.** Approximately half the divorces are granted within the first six years of marriage, about one-sixth during the seventh to the ninth year, inclusive, and about one-third during or after the tenth year. Only about 4 per cent occur before the end of the first year.<sup>1</sup> These figures show that couples do not rush into divorce as soon as, or with as little provocation as is commonly assumed or as the exceptional spectacular case seems to indicate. It usually takes time for a couple to discover that their marriage is a failure. After that, more time will pass before they bring themselves to the point where divorce is sought as a remedy or escape. The figures also show that many couples wait until their children are grown, for about 10 per cent of the divorces occur after twenty years of marriage.

**Children as a Deterrent.** More than half the divorces are granted to childless couples and more than another fifth to couples who are parents of one child.<sup>2</sup> Does this indicate that children are a deterrent to divorce? It does not. A child may be a source of conflict as well as a bond. The same factors operating to make a couple avoid having children may contribute to the failure of their marriage and to their inclination to seek divorce.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, in many cases in which there are no children the divorce occurred rather early in the marriage, when there was insufficient time to have offspring. There is no way of determining whether such couples would have had children or not. In some cases there is no doubt but that children are the reason for a couple's continuing to live together after their marriage has failed. In others, too, children serve as a very absorbing common interest, which binds the couple together and may counteract some of the factors operating to force them apart. There is no way of generalizing, and the statistics are inconclusive. Here again we must beware of the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy in thinking. It would be the height of the ridiculous to recommend that a couple have a child to prevent their failing marriage from ending in divorce, as if children were a specific for marital ills, unless one were positive that the remedy prescribed actually fitted the needs of the couple in a particular case.

<sup>1</sup> U. S. Bureau of Census, Marriage and Divorce, 1931, p. 27; 1932, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1932, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> LICHTENBERGER, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-137.

**Grounds for Action.** Grounds for divorce may be considered from two related points of view. They are the reasons alleged by a person seeking divorce on the basis of which he asserts that he has been injured and claims that a divorce should be granted. Grounds are also the categories of reasons for which the law permits divorce and the courts grant it. Grounds and causes are not necessarily the same, either for divorce in general or for the divorce of a specific couple. Usually what happens is something like this. A couple are incompatible. Their marriage is unsatisfactory and unsuccessful. This leads one or both of them to commit some act—such as desertion, nonsupport, adultery—which is a symptom of maladjustment but does fall within the categories of the law. On this basis one seeks divorce; or, being incompatible, they may agree that they both want divorce. They then fit their situation into the most convenient legal categories so that the plea of one conforms to legal requirements and a divorce may be decreed. In many cases this amounts to a deliberate “trumping up” of grounds to satisfy the court. In New York, for example, where the only ground acceptable is adultery, a couple may agree to get a divorce. Then the husband hires an accomplice and witnesses to assist him in “proving” his “adultery,” and a divorce is granted on this ground. For reasons such as these, statistics of divorce grounds do not give an accurate picture of conditions.

Grounds vary from state to state. They have been worked out with more regard for institutional considerations, such as status, support, rights, than for problems of personality adjustment. The reader will find them summarized in any of a number of volumes.<sup>1</sup>

Statistically the grounds are changing.

1. *As Written in the Laws of the Several States.* For example, between 1905 and 1930 the number of states permitting divorce for cruelty increased from thirty-six to forty-four. During that

<sup>1</sup>See VERNIER, CHESTER, “Family Laws,” Stanford University Press, Stanford University, Calif., 1931–1938; DRUMMOND, ISABEL, “Getting a Divorce,” Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1931; RICHMOND, MARY E., and FRED S. HALL, “Marriage and the State,” Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1929; “A Survey of the Legal Status of Women,” National League of Women Voters, Washington, D. C., 1930; and HUDGINGS, FRANKLIN, “What Everyone Should Know about the Laws of Marriage and Divorce,” New Century Company, New York, 1935.

period six states added and one abandoned nonsupport. Ten states added insanity.<sup>1</sup> The general trend seems to be toward extending the number of grounds.

2. *As Alleged in Specific Cases.* Desertion and adultery as grounds alleged have declined. Cruelty has almost doubled in frequency, increasing from 22 per cent in the period 1887 to 1906 to 42 per cent in 1930.<sup>2</sup>

The definition of *cruelty* is constantly shifting and is difficult to ascertain with any degree of finality or assurance. *Cruelty* ranges from physical violence to the most ridiculous absurdities. Drummond cites cases in which divorce was granted on the ground of cruelty for the following reasons: because a wife would not speak for days at a time and, when she did open her mouth, it was only to consume the meals the husband prepared for the family and to complain about his cooking; because a husband required his wife to retire at nine or nine-thirty o'clock; because the husband used Biblical language to insult his wife; because the husband failed to make his children stop playing the saxophone; because a wife claimed that a pet cat had deprived her of her husband's affection.<sup>3</sup> A newspaper article states that a woman is seeking divorce on the ground of cruelty because her husband used her pet goldfish for bait.

This latitude in the interpretation of *cruelty* is not new. Convers, writing in 1889, cites cases in which divorce was granted on the ground of cruelty because a husband threw water over his wife; because a wife contracted the itch from her husband; because a husband had a vulgar and profane mannerism.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, there is a tendency for freedom of interpretation to increase.

The statistical change in cruelty as an alleged ground for divorce may show one or more of several things. (1) That courts are becoming more lenient in granting divorce. (2) That divorce is being granted on less serious grounds. (3) That the true causes for marital failure are being recognized

<sup>1</sup> "Recent Social Trends," p. 694, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1933.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 695.

<sup>3</sup> DRUMMOND, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-103.

<sup>4</sup> CONVERS, D., "Marriage and Divorce in the United States," pp. 186-188, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1889.

and their seriousness acknowledged. If this is true, it means that fewer couples are having to perjure themselves in order to obtain release. (4) That *cruelty* may be more readily established and proved than other grounds. The term is more flexible and permits broader interpretation by the court than, say, *adultery* or *nonsupport*. (5) That we are taking a more intelligent attitude toward divorce. (6) That courts and the general public are becoming more willing to have divorces granted for incompatibility although in only one state, New Mexico, and Alaska is it included among the grounds for divorce defined by statute. We still make couples disguise it, lie about it, and squeeze it into the most convenient category of the law. (7) That more is expected of marriage today, that standards of success are rising to a new plane. When expectations are not achieved, escape is permitted. The standards of success are becoming more personal and less institutional.

#### EFFECTS OF DIVORCE UPON THE INDIVIDUAL

**Effects of Divorce upon the Couple.** For a more detailed discussion of the effects of divorce upon the couple the reader is referred to books that treat the subject more fully.<sup>1</sup> Here a few remarks must suffice.

For many individuals divorce is jumping from the frying pan into the fire. It does not solve their problem. There is a difference between "solution" and "escape." After the decree and the removal of the immediately aggravating circumstances, the divorcé often feels that he loved his mate more than he realized, that the situation was not so bad after all, that the divorce was too hasty, and that the decree is regrettable.

The divorced person faces several acute problems. He must settle the conflict and rebellion within himself. He must repair wounded pride. He must readjust his habits. Often he does not realize until he is called upon to change them how much a part of his life many little habits have come to be. He must reorganize his social relationships and friendships. He must grow accustomed to a new relationship with his children, whether he is separated from them or has them with him without the

<sup>1</sup> WALLER, WILLARD, "The Old Love and the New," Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York, 1930; and SLADE, FRANCIS, "Divorce If You Must," Coward-McCann, Inc., New York, 1938.

other parent. He must reorient his sexual life. There are several courses open to him: he may cheapen sex; he may become promiscuous; he may repress or sublimate his impulses; he may attempt a substitute through remarriage. If the person left alone by divorce is a woman, she must arrange for support.

Marriage, even a marriage that is not particularly satisfactory, has a way of becoming part of an individual, part of his life, part of his personality. He develops behavior patterns having his marriage at the core. He cannot readily erase the memories of courtship days and the early years of marriage. The image of the spouse-that-used-to-be plagues him. In the idealization lent by time and distance he tends to forget the unpleasant aspects of his marriage and magnify those that were pleasant. At best, the divorced individual must go through a period of trying readjustment. In few cases is it easy. In some instances divorce does solve problems or afford effective escape from those that are insoluble. In other instances the problems are too deep-set to be solved by court decree. The individual, though altering the type of problem he confronts, does not really decrease the intensity of the problem situation.

**Effects of Divorce upon Children.** It is impossible to separate the effects of divorce, as such, and the effects of the failing home situation, because divorce is preceded by marital failure. The child may not be aware of this, however, and sometimes the divorce brings to an abrupt and unexpected end a relationship that he had never questioned. This happens even with children of college age who, in many cases, are surprised and taken aback when parents announce their intention of getting a divorce.

The child of divorced parents is in a position somewhat akin to that of the middle horse in a three-horse team, which is pulled now in one direction, now in another, now in both at once, as it attempts to accommodate itself to the movements of the other two horses. The child is torn between conflicting loyalties. He tries to cooperate with and to understand two persons who are at odds and do not understand each other. If he lives with each of them at different times, he is pulled first one way, then another. In neither home is he prepared for living in the other. He may be inclined to lean more toward one parent, and this leads to disillusionment and disappointment. He lives in a society where home and parents are taken for granted. He has, there-

fore, to face the attitude of his contemporaries, some of whom will chide him for his equivocal family status. There may be a carry-over of the attitude that divorce is a disgrace, and the child must defend himself against this. He may fear adverse public opinion or loss of prestige. In short, he is likely to develop a feeling of insecurity, and this feeling may lead him to compensatory behavior, which makes for more or less maladjustment. This is not always true. There are children of divorced parents who are very well adjusted.

Let us imagine that the reader's parents have just informed him that they are contemplating divorce. The announcement comes as a surprise. He had sensed that their marriage was not exactly perfect, and now that a divorce is impending he can look back to events of the past and read into them new meaning. He begins to see that the situation was worse than he thought, that it had been crumbling for some time. Nevertheless, he had never suspected a complete break, and the announcement of divorce shocks him. He is confused. Conflict upsets him. He begins to worry. In his mixed-up thinking he makes many trials and an equal number of errors in seeking a way out. No solution he can think of seems to fit. He lies awake at night. He cannot study. He seems to feel life constantly pressing in upon him. His security seems threatened. The world he had always taken for granted, which he had assumed would remain as it was, which was the very foundation of many of the things in life about which he felt sure, is about to collapse. What can he do? There are several things that he may do in an attempt to reorient himself.

He should think first of his parents rather than of himself. They have been unhappy and dissatisfied and are contemplating a move which they believe will make them more content. In some cases they have sacrificed their own happiness and submerged their feelings in order to remain together until the child was old enough to be independent. Whatever harm there may be has already been done. The divorce will be only a result rather than a cause of their unhappiness.

They will still be his parents, no matter where they live. Nothing can change that. They may change their geographic location but they cannot change their relationship to their child. Probably, too, he may still see them, though perhaps not together.

They will need someone upon whom they can depend, since their world, too, is badly shaken. The child may be such a one if he keeps his mind clear and maintains his emotional equilibrium. Certainly, making three persons unhappy will not make two of them happy.

The child must recognize that his parents are adults. He may sympathize with them and help them in any way possible. But it is their problem, not his. No doubt they had a problem long before he was old enough to become aware of it. Without becoming indifferent, he should try to remain objective, detached, and independent. The probability is that the child can play little if any part in the solution of the problem. His age is against him. He is in a more disadvantageous position even than an outsider. If his parents cannot solve their own problem, how can he expect to do so for them? Certainly he cannot solve it through worry. Talking with a trusted counselor may help to clear his thinking and relieve his emotions, however.

The child should not assume the blame for the parents' failure. Looking back at his home life he may recall instances in which he seemed to be the center of their conflict; but in all probability he was only the focal point, not the cause. Even if he were the cause upon occasion, he was no doubt not intentionally so. He may have committed many of the errors of adolescence, but that should not make him assume blame now, for his assumption of blame cannot solve his parents' problem. They do not hold him to blame.

Very few divorces are entirely one-sided as to causation. One parent's contribution to the failure may be more apparent to the child than the other's. But the child may accept as a safe and reasonable working rule that both were at fault in one way or another and that the causation was complex. When two people marry, each assumes a responsibility for the success of their mutual adjustment. When adjustment does not work out as they had hoped, the very fact of their assumption of responsibility makes each partly to blame. The child, however, should avoid placing blame. His responsibility is to understand, not to censure. He should not take sides.

The child should also try to realize that his parents' problem in no way reflects upon him. We have passed the day when the child of divorced persons was considered disgraced. He is what



he is—no more, no less—no matter what the marital status of his parents.

The child should try to avoid generalizing on the basis of his parents' experience. As has been said in the discussion of maturity, he may take the attitude that their divorce will unalterably distort his future or he may take the attitude that he will profit by their mistakes.

He should also avoid exaggerating the significance of relatively unimportant things. For example, the divorce may make it impossible for the family to be together on the child's birthday, as has been their custom. The importance of foregoing the birthday celebration may easily be exaggerated, since it may serve as a symbol of the child's reaction to the total situation. Actually, the birthday party is not nearly so important as many other things now to be considered, since the crisis is imminent.

#### SUGGESTED REMEDIES

Before it is possible to talk intelligently about remedies for the situation in which marriage and divorce are seen to be, the objectives must be made clear. Is the objective in view to decrease divorce or to increase marital success? The latter would lead to the former, but the former would not produce the latter. If the aim is merely to reduce the number of divorces, this could be accomplished by making divorce more difficult through legal definitions and impediments. That would be to treat symptoms rather than the disease. More stringent divorce laws would not make marriages more successful; they would only prevent escape. Making operations prohibitively expensive would not prevent illness; it would only reduce the number of operations.

Legalizing divorce by mutual consent has often been suggested, and there is something to be said for it. At present, a couple may marry by mutual consent but they may not unmarry on this basis. The assumption in prohibiting the latter is that there are considerations of property, children, status, responsibility. The same considerations hold in getting married. A couple may marry by mutual consent and then not fulfill their responsibilities.

At present, if one spouse wants a divorce, it may be granted. If both want it, they cannot get it—at least, not if they make their common desire known. Collusion—that is, previous agreement as to intent to divorce and the grounds to be alleged—is sufficient

cause for a court to dismiss a suit. In order to obtain a divorce under our present system, one party must prove injury by the other and it must be injury of a type permitted by the law of a particular state. If the couple themselves recognize that they have both been injured, they cannot get a divorce unless they conceal their understanding and perjure themselves in court to "prove" that one was innocent and the other guilty. We already have divorce by mutual consent, but it has not been legalized.

In discussing divorce by mutual consent there is a common tendency to begin with the present system and set it up as a norm. This makes necessary the justification of change. One could just as well, perhaps even better, start with divorce by mutual consent and insist that the proponents of the *status quo* justify divorce granted on the plea of only one spouse when the other may or may not want it. We do not force people to marry, but we do force them to remain married or to become unmarried against their will. Perhaps neither system is entirely desirable, to the complete exclusion of the other. What is needed is not divorce, either as we have it at present or by mutual consent, but divorce when it is necessary, whether one or both parties desire it. This implies laws adapted to present needs and interpreted by courts having insight into marital problems. It implies the elimination of an attitude and a system through which modern marriage is squeezed into outmoded forms.

Those who believe that divorce by mutual consent would jeopardize marriage and produce an unprecedented increase in the divorce rate have only to look to the countries where such divorce is legalized. Their rates are lower than ours. In the United States there is one divorce for every six marriages. In Japan there is one in ten, in Denmark one in eleven, in Norway one in sixteen, in Sweden one in twenty.<sup>1</sup> Ours is one of the highest divorce rates in the world.

In lieu of more stringent divorce laws some persons have suggested stricter marriage laws. The latter would no doubt prove the more effective. There is also needed more thorough enforcement, both of new laws and the ones already on the statute books. A period of waiting between license and wedding, more thorough medical examinations, more careful investigation of applicants

<sup>1</sup> HART, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-198.

for licenses, more adequate age qualifications, and other similar stipulations would no doubt play a part in preventing ill-advised marriages.

Uniform laws have also been suggested. Certainly even the proponents of variety for the sake of experimentation must admit that variety need not extend from one extreme to another. There can be an approach to uniformity without identity. The greatest danger in making marriage and divorce laws uniform in all states, or in passing Federal legislation in this field, is that the uniform or national laws would represent compromises. As it is, some states are more progressive than others. Compromise would mean the loss of some of the progress secured in the more advanced states.

In the last analysis, the most effective remedy for the situation in which marriage and divorce now stand is education—the gradual, slow, tedious education of a public, part of which is inert and apathetic and not even aware of the need for preparing people for marriage or for departing from timeworn and threadbare tradition. It is hoped that, coupled with education, there will be advantageous changes in the economic structure, enabling young people to marry at a reasonable age and to maintain an acceptable standard of living. The advancement of marriage depends also upon the raising of the general cultural level and improving the emotional, social, and intellectual adjustment of the individual, for, as was mentioned in an earlier connection, marriage can be no better than the people in it.



achieve alone and personal qualities that he himself does not possess.

Marriage can give one the sense of identifying himself with a growing process, which begins—not ends—with the wedding, and becomes richer as time goes on.

My perfect wife, my Leonor,  
Oh heart, my own, oh eyes, mine too,  
Whom else could I dare look backward for,  
With whom beside should I dare pursue  
The path gray heads abhor?

For it leads to a crag's sheer edge with them;  
Youth, flowery all the way, there stops—  
Not they; age threatens and they contemn,  
Till they reach the gulf wherein youth drops,  
One inch from life's safe hem!

\* \* \* \* \*

My own, confirm me! If I tread  
This path back, is it not in pride  
To think how little I dreamed it led  
To an age so blest that, by its side,  
Youth seems the waste instead?

My own, see where the years conduct!  
At first, 'twas something our two souls  
Should mix as mists do; each is sucked  
In each now; on, the new stream rolls,  
Whatever rocks obstruct.

—ROBERT BROWNING, *By the Fireside*.

Here are not the tumultuous emotions of courtship, but something deeper and finer. Courtship is the ripples along the shore. This sort of marriage is the great tides that sweep the ocean. Courtship is the glare of the sun. Marriage is the infinite horizon, where sky and earth blend into the eternal vastness.

One morning as Robert Browning stood by the window thinking of his work and waiting for the breakfast dishes to be cleared away so that he could use the table for writing, Elizabeth, his wife, thrust something into his pocket and slipped out of the room. In surprise, he drew out a sheaf of papers and began to read. An hour later he was still standing there, still reading, his eyes wet with tears, as one after another of her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*

bore to him an expression of his wife's love, which reached a climax in these lines:

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
For the ends of being and ideal grace.  
I love thee to the level of every day's  
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.  
I love thee freely, as men strive for right.  
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.  
I love thee with the passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.  
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,  
Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,  
I shall but love thee better after death.

Marriage can give one a sense of being part of life in a larger way, a sense of oneness with life, a feeling that "This is one of the reasons I am here and alive, one of the fundamental reasons for which I was born." It enables one to feel that here is something that can be placed first, something to which he would willingly give his all. It enables one to lose himself in something bigger than himself, not because he is submerged in it or by it, but in such a way that his own life becomes richer for having lost self in that larger thing.

Marriage can make for focus rather than dissipation in life. It can redirect urges, impulses, and ambitions toward the highest things we know. Human beings do not live by sensation alone. They create a world of meaning and of values. Man's is not merely the natural world as he finds it. It is partly a world of his own creation. Meaning and values are within the self. Physical things are in a way only symbols; they are not that by which man truly lives.

Marriage can give a sense of attainment similar to the satisfaction derived from any creative achievement. In art, beauty is created by relationships, not by isolated units and pigments. Paints in pots are not beautiful. It is only when they are blended, mingled, and interrelated through time and skill that beauty is created.

The raw materials of love are yours—  
Fond hearts, and lusty blood, and minds in tune;  
And so, dear innocents, you think yourselves  
Lovers full-blown.

Am I, because I own  
Chisel, mallet, and stone,  
A sculptor? And must he  
Who hears a skylark and can hold a pen  
A poet be?

If neither so, why then  
You're not yet lovers. But in time to come  
(If sense grow not duller nor spirit dumb)  
By constant exercise of skill and wit,  
By patient toil and judgment exquisite  
Of body, mind, and heart,  
You may, my innocents, fashion  
This tenderness, this liking, and this passion  
Into a work of art.

*Epithalamion* by Jan Struthers.<sup>1</sup>

Marriage affords the opportunity to give someone else happiness. "When two people love each other," wrote Guy de Maupassant, "nothing is more imperative and delightful than *giving*; to give always and everything, one's thoughts, one's life, one's body, and all that one has; and to feel the gift and risk everything in order to be able to give more, still more."

Marriage yields the satisfaction of having another individual depend upon one emotionally and gives the realization that oneself is a major factor in that person's world. It gives untold opportunity for sharing and for being shared with; joys, sorrows, experiences, thoughts, ideas, things owned are all enhanced by such sharing. Life acquires new meaning when it is lived for and with another. Enlargement of life comes from knowing another individual so thoroughly that one's own capacity to live is doubled.

Marriage can give one the feeling of never being alone at any time or anywhere. Young lovers walking hand in hand have a sense of nearness, a feeling of being where they want to be.

<sup>1</sup> In "The Glassblower and Other Poems," Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc., New York.

There may be a similar feeling in marriage, but in a broader, deeper sense and in a way that transcends distance and makes husband and wife seem together though apart. It gives the individual an emotional mooring post, a goal and direction for life. It gives him the sense that someone is always "there" to be relied upon, no matter what else seems uncertain and insecure.

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand  
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore  
Alone upon the threshold of my door  
Of individual life, I shall command  
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand  
Serenely in the sunshine as before,  
Without the sense of that which I forebore,—  
Thy touch upon my palm. The widest land  
Doom takes to part us leaves thy heart in mine  
With pulses that beat double. What I do  
And what I dream include thee, as the wine  
Must taste of its own grapes. And, when I sue  
God for myself, he hears that name of thine,  
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING; *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.

Every human being needs someone to believe in him—not necessarily for achievement, but for contentment and happiness. Each needs someone who knows without being told, someone who sees beneath exteriors. Marriage brings such a one.

There are also in you and in me,  
As in everyone else, things lacking,  
A particular weapon  
You cannot lay hands on;  
But it happens always, luckily for us,  
That I can lay hold of that weapon,  
That your garden is alive with those flowers,  
And that we go, without asking, the one to the other  
To take what we need.

You are well aware of my wants  
And of my weaknesses;  
They turn to you unabashed,  
You receive them and love them;  
And I equally love yours,  
Which are a part of your strength.



And so each of us . . .  
Goes and may go with assurance,  
Because of a hand which is ready,  
At the least peril, to turn and take hold  
Of the wandering arm of the blind man  
That you become, or that I become,  
Like everyone else, from time to time.

“A Book of Love,” by Charles Vildrac.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Translated from the French by Witter Bynner.

## GLOSSARY

**abortion.** The expulsion of the fetus before it is viable (able to live outside the mother's body), that is, before the twenty-sixth to the twenty-eighth week of prenatal development. After the twenty-sixth to the twenty-eighth week the expulsion of the fetus is termed *premature birth* or *premature delivery* up until term. Abortions are of three types: spontaneous, induced, therapeutic. Spontaneous abortion is sometimes referred to as miscarriage.

**acquired trait.** A characteristic produced through environmental influence; for example, an injury, a habit. See *congenital* and *inherited*.

**adjustment.** The process of reconciling conflicting tendencies within the individual, those between two individuals, or those between the individual and his environment. Improving the relationship of two individuals or of an individual and his environment so that satisfaction and pleasure are increased or pain is decreased.

**adulthood.** A social status. An individual reaches adulthood when he attains the age at which he has a certain social position or certain expectations are set up for him. It is not the same as maturity. An individual may be adult yet not mature.

**amniotic fluid.** The fluid inside the amniotic sac, in which the fetus is suspended.

**amniotic sac.** A membranous sac inside the uterus, in which the fetus develops. The amnion.

**annulment.** A court declaration that a supposed marriage is null and void, that is, that no marriage exists, even though the couple or one of them thought it did. For example, the couple go through a wedding ceremony in good faith and later discover they are brother and sister, or the girl goes through with what seems to her a bona fide wedding and later learns that the man already has a wife. After annulment the couple are single, as they were before their "wedding." Divorce is the severing of marriage ties; annulment is the declaration that none ever existed.

**attitude.** A predisposition to react in a given way. For example, an individual whose attitude toward marriage is unfavorable may avoid dating, make fun of love, disparage education for marriage. An attitude may or may not be expressed verbally. It should not be confused with an opinion. The latter is an expression of belief. Back of an opinion may lie an attitude, but the opinion is not the attitude.

**behavior.** Activity. Functioning. It may or may not be overt, that is, open, outward, readily observed. For example, becoming angry without giving any overt indication of it is part of behavior just as much as flying into a rage is.

**bigamy.** In a sense there is no such thing as bigamy in this country. What is termed *bigamy* is actually attempted bigamy, since no one is permitted to have more than one husband or wife at a time. If the attempt

is made, the act constitutes a crime and the second, void, "marriage" is bigamous.

**Caesarian section.** An abdominal operation by means of which a child is removed from the mother's body without the normal birth process.

**celibacy.** State of being unmarried. Singleness. Usually applied to the condition of a person who remains single permanently or is bound by vows not to marry, rather than to a person who is single only because he has not yet married (for example, a student).

**cervix.** The small, lower end of the uterus.

**child marriage.** Marriage in which one or both of the parties (usually, the girl) is fifteen years of age or under.

**chromosome.** One of the small bodies within a cell that bear the determiners of hereditary traits.

**complex.** A group or series of connected reactions set off by a single stimulus which may have little obvious or direct connection with the response and which produces a response often out of proportion to the intensity of the stimulus. The response usually has a strongly emotional tone. For example, your reaction upon receiving a letter from someone you love. The term should not be used loosely to mean any emotion, feeling, or attitude.

**conditioning; conditioned response.** The result of the association of two stimuli and a given response. When two stimuli occur together a sufficient number of times, at length they tend to produce the same response. In this way a response elicited by a given stimulus may come to be elicited by a substitute stimulus. Such a response is conditioned. For example, a child is shown a rabbit and reaches for it. At the moment of reaching, the child is frightened by a loud noise. Soon the sight of the rabbit will frighten him. A child studies history with an unpleasant teacher. Both the teacher and the subject are associated with his reaction to the teacher. At length, the subject alone elicits a reaction similar to his reaction to the teacher. The subject has become a substitute stimulus. He loses interest in history, does not like to study it, does poorly in it.

**conflict.** A condition in which two or more tendencies or desires in an individual are unreconciled. A choice must be made before he can act. Or a condition in which the tendencies or desires of two individuals are unreconciled, so that adjustment remains incomplete, precarious, unpleasant, or unsatisfactory to one or both. Conflict by no means always implies open quarreling.

**congenital trait.** A characteristic acquired by an individual before birth. For example, a child may be born with a disease contracted from the mother. The term is also used to indicate traits with which a person is born when there is no certainty as to whether the traits were inherited or acquired. See *inherited* and *acquired traits*.

**consanguinity.** So-called "blood relationship." A consanguineous marriage is one in which the parties are relatives.

**consumption.** The term is most often used in the economic sense as use of goods. It may also be extended to mean the appropriation of services and the appreciation of art, music, etc.

**contributing factor.** In social science and psychology, where measurement and prediction are not as exact as in the physical sciences, it is better to use the term *contributing factor* than to use *cause* in most instances, because causation is often complex and phenomena are the outgrowth of several factors working together in varying proportions. The effect of one alone cannot readily be ascertained. For example, it is better to say that the First World War was one of the contributing factors in the increased divorce rate than to say it was a cause.

**courtship.** The events and relationships leading up to the wedding. The process by which two persons of opposite sex become acquainted with each other in an amatory way with the possibility of marriage in view.

**cultural lag.** Some parts of culture (civilization) develop more rapidly than do others that are associated with them. The difference in development rate is cultural lag. The result is maladjustment. For example, tests for drivers are needed but at present they lag behind the development of fast cars. In many states a girl may marry at a very early age. There is need for more sensible marriage laws, but laws tend to lag behind modern social conditions.

**divorce.** The legal severing of marital ties. In divorce the court recognizes that a marriage existed but, for due cause, the original relationship of husband and wife is terminated. A divorced person is one who has been married, an ex-spouse. See *annulment*.

**ductless glands.** See *endocrine glands*.

**dysmenorrhea.** Painful menstruation.

**elopement.** A wedding that occurs in such a manner that family and friends are not aware of it until afterward, or one that is planned to occur beyond the possibility of control or interference by family or friends. It may be a "runaway marriage." It is usually secret at the time of the ceremony; that is, it is a secret wedding. It is not the same as a secret marriage.

**embryo.** An unborn child during the first two months of prenatal development. See *fetus*.

**emotion.** Behavior accompanied by or produced by physiologic changes in the individual. It is usually intense. The term is commonly used to mean feeling in the other-than-tactile sense. *Emotional* applies to emotion but does not always or necessarily mean excitable or nervous.

**endocrine glands.** Glands that pour their secretions directly into the blood stream; for example, thyroid, pituitary.

**Fallopian tube.** A tube extending from the uterus to the ovary. There are two tubes, one on either side. The tube is connected with the uterus but is not directly connected with the ovary. It forms the passage for the ovum in its journey from ovary to uterus. Fertilization usually takes place in one of the tubes.

**feeble-mindedness.** The state of being below normal intelligence. It is lack of adequate mental equipment. It may be hereditary but is not invariably so. Idiots, imbeciles, morons are feeble-minded.

**fertility.** Ability to produce offspring.

**fertilization.** The union of sperm and ovum.

**fetus** (pronounced fee-tus). An unborn child after the second month of prenatal development. See *embryo*.

**fixation.** Stoppage of emotional development at an earlier level than the individual's possibilities might permit or his calendar age might imply. For example, an individual has a mother fixation if his attitude toward his mother remains at an immature, childish level and never develops to maturity. He continues to love his mother as he did when he was a child, although he has now grown to be a man.

**fraternal twins.** Twins produced when two ova are fertilized and develop simultaneously. They may be of the same or of different sex.

**Friedman test.** The rabbit test for pregnancy.

**frustration.** Thwarting. The failure of an individual to satisfy his desires or impulses in the customary or habitual way. The blocking of drives by obstacles in the environment (for example, the individual cannot get a job because of the depression); by obstacles within the individual (for example, he cannot get a job because of a physical defect); by other drives (for example, a student cannot study and faces failure because, when he tries to concentrate, his thoughts turn to trouble at home). See *inhibition*.

**function.** The action of an organ, of an object, of a type of behavior. For example, the function of the eyes is seeing. *Function* is not the same as *purpose*, and the terms should not be confused. *Purpose* implies a pre-determined end or goal. A person moves about freely because he can see, that is, as a result of the functioning of his eyes. His eyes do not act as they do in order that he may move about freely. This would imply purpose. We know nothing of natural purposes; we know only functions.

**gene.** A determiner of a hereditary trait. It is located on a chromosome.

**germ plasm.** A general term applied to the material of which sperms and ova are composed. The material of the sex cells as opposed to that of the body cells.

**Graafian follicle.** The blusterlike formation on the surface of the ovary, in which the ripening ovum develops and which breaks to release the ovum at the time of ovulation.

**grounds for divorce.** The alleged reasons for which a person seeks divorce. The reasons for which the law will permit divorce. Grounds are not always or necessarily causes or contributing factors. Grounds are often trumped up to satisfy the court; or the person seeking divorce makes his plea in such a way that the facts revealed fit into one of the legal categories of state in which the divorce is sought. Causes for divorce are the true, basic reasons and even here it would be more nearly accurate to speak of contributing factors. For example, a couple are incompatible but incompatibility is not a ground for divorce. Consequently, the party seeking the divorce claims cruelty.

**gynecologist.** A physician who specializes in women's diseases.

**heterosexual.** Interested in the opposite sex, as opposed to *homosexual*, which means interested in members of one's own sex.

**hormone.** A chemical substance secreted by an endocrine (ductless) gland and having a profound effect on metabolism.

**identical twins.** Twins produced when an embryo breaks into two parts early in its development and each part develops into a child. They are always of the same sex.

**inherited behavior pattern.** A pattern or series of activities carried out more or less automatically because the organism, constructed as it is, reacts in a specific way to certain stimuli. It is termed *inherited behavior pattern* because the determiners of it are carried in the germ plasm. For example, an infant fears lack of support (falling) without learning to do so. He must learn to fear snakes.

**inherited trait.** A characteristic for which the determiners are carried in the germ plasm; for example, eye color. See *acquired* and *congenital traits*.

**inhibition.** Restraint of behavior from within the individual. The blocking of a response by a restraining influence in the individual rather than in the environment. Interference of one activity or impulse with another. One idea or impulse impeding another. For example, an individual becomes retiring and cannot carry on a conversation because he is afraid of people. Inhibition differs from frustration in that in the former the impeding impulse is stronger than the one impeded. In a sense, the impeding is less unpleasant than the expression of the restrained impulse would be. In frustration there is a strong desire to express the restrained impulse but no way can be found to do so. The restraint is more unpleasant than expression would be. See *frustration*.

**insanity.** Technically, *insanity* is a legal term signifying that mental state of an individual because of which he is counted incapable of managing his own affairs and cannot be held responsible for his acts. The term is used ordinarily to mean mental disease. Actually, there is no such thing as insanity if the term is used to mean a specific disease. There are only mental and emotional symptoms, which may be grouped in various ways to constitute the various mental diseases.

**institution.** A cluster of mores and folkways centering around a given interest. For example, marriage, property, religion are institutions.

**lactation.** The secretion of milk.

**marriage.** An institution. State of wedlock or matrimony. A relationship between a man and a woman occurring in a social setting, bounded by social and religious definitions and restrictions, granting rights and privileges, imposing duties, and highly colored by custom and tradition. Not the same as *wedding*, *family*, or *mating*.

**maternal death rate.** The number of mothers per 10,000 live births who die as a result of causes associated with pregnancy and childbirth.

**mating.** The physiologic pairing or union of male and female in response to sexual urges and of such nature that procreation may result. Not the same as *marriage*. Marriage is an institution that includes mating. Animals mate but do not marry. Human beings marry and mate.

**maturity.** State of full development. Not the same as adulthood. Maturity does not imply perfection.

**menstruation.** The process by which the lining of the uterus is sloughed off with the discharge of some blood when the ovum is not fertilized. Menstruation is not caused by ovulation. Both are the result of glandular

control. It might be said that menstruation is "caused" by the lack of conception. The uterus is prepared for the implantation of a fertilized ovum. If this implantation does not occur, menstruation does.

**miscarriage.** A commonly used but medically obsolete term meaning spontaneous abortion.

**monogamy.** A type of marriage in which a man has only one wife and a woman one husband at a time.

**mores** (pronounced mo-reez or mo-rays; singular is *mos*, pronounced with a long o). The customs and ways of life of a society which are deemed essential to social welfare and are accepted as right and good; for example, monogamous marriage. Folkways are customs that are accepted as right and good, but they do not carry the same weight with respect to social welfare as do mores; for example, eating with a knife and fork. It is considered poor manners, or lack of good form to violate the folkways. To violate the mores is considered disastrous to social welfare, and the violator may be penalized. Mores are frequently expressed in laws, but they themselves are not laws.

**normal.** In accordance with what most people do most of the time. Or that condition which may be expected in a given group through a period of time. For example, marriage is normal because about 90 per cent of the population marry. But 10 per cent do not marry, and that makes some lack of marriage a normal expectation in the group. The normal may also be thought of as variation. *Normal* is not the same as *desirable*, *perfect*, or *average*.

**obstetrician.** A physician who specializes in taking care of and delivering pregnant women.

**ovary.** Female sex gland. The organ in which ova are formed.

**ovulation.** The secretion of an ovum from an ovary.

**ovum** (plural—ova). Female sex cell; egg.

**placenta.** The disk-shaped organ to which the umbilical cord is attached and through which nourishment passes from mother to fetus.

**polygamy.** Plural marriage. A type of marriage in which a man has more than one wife at a time (*polygyny*) or a woman has more than one husband at a time (*polyandry*).

**post hoc, ergo propter hoc.** Literally translated this phrase means *after this, therefore because of this*. It is a fallacy in thinking or reasoning in which a time sequence is confused with a cause-effect sequence. For example, you see a black cat. Later you have an accident. The accident followed the seeing of the cat in time, therefore the cat is thought to be the cause of the accident.

**premature birth.** See *abortion*.

**presentation.** The position of the child as birth begins.

**problem.** An area of life activity or a set of circumstances to which an individual is motivated to react and with regard to which he (1) is aware of a need for more information, or (2) has sufficient information but has not yet drawn a conclusion, reached a decision, or worked out a plan of action. *Problem* is by no means always synonymous with *difficulty*, *trouble* or

*maladjustment.* Learning to drive a car presents problems. So does deciding how to spend your allowance, making friends, living with a roommate.

*puerperal septicemia.* A type of blood poisoning due to infection during childbirth or abortion. "Child-bed fever."

*rate.* A proportion. A relative rather than an absolute number. So many per 1,000, 10,000, 100,000, as the case may be. In 1936, for example, there were 2,144,790 children born. The birth rate was 16.7 per 1,000 population.

*rationalization.* The process of stating what appears to the individual as an acceptable reason for what happens or what he does, in place of the actual reason. Blaming the incidental cause. Making alibis, excuses. For example, a student says she could not get her work done because other students came into her room and prevented her from studying. Rationalization may also be of the sour grapes variety—a person concludes that what he wanted is not so desirable after all. For example, a student fails to pledge the fraternity of his choice and decides that fraternities are not what they are reputed to be. Or it may be of the sweet-lemon variety—a person concludes that his lot is not so distasteful as it at first appeared. For example, a man says he is glad he is poor because the rich have so many responsibilities.

*regression.* The process of retreating from a more mature level of adjustment to a less mature one. For example, the proverbial bride who tries to make an adjustment in marriage but fails, and goes home to mother.

*repression.* Forcing or attempting to force an impulse to cease demanding expression. Attempting to prevent an impulse from entering one's consciousness. For example, a person may repress the memory of an event unpleasant to remember. A repressed impulse may play a part in an individual's behavior without his being aware of it.

*role.* Part played. For example, the role of the wife is changing, that is, the part she plays in marriage is changing. An individual has more than one role. For example, a student acts in one way toward college friends, in another way with parents.

*secret marriage.* The new relationship of husband and wife is not revealed after the wedding. Both wedding ceremony and marriage are secret. There may be secret wedding without secret marriage, but there cannot readily be secret marriage without secret wedding.

*somatic.* This term refers to body cells or tissues as opposed to sex cells. For example, muscle tissue is somatic tissue, while germ plasma is not.

*sperm* (spermatozoon; plural—spermatozoa). Male sex cell.

*spouse.* Either husband or wife. A married person, regardless of sex.

*status.* Position, state of being, condition. Social status is social position.

*sterility.* The inability to produce offspring.

*stimulus* (plural—stimuli). That which arouses or sustains activity or a reaction; for example, a pinprick, a suggestion.

*survival.* A custom or practice that has maintained its form but lost its original function. A social "fossil" or "vestige." For example, throwing rice at a bride and groom was done originally as a fertility rite but is now done for "luck" or merely because it is customary.



**tension.** A physiological, emotional, or mental state tending to give rise to activity. For example, if an individual is constantly irritated, tension increases and he may "explode" at the slightest provocation.

**term.** A period of nine months. A full-term baby is one born at the end of the normal nine-month period of pregnancy.

**testicle, testis** (plural—testes; pronounced tes-tees). Male sex gland. Place where sperms are formed.

**umbilical cord.** The cord connecting placenta and fetus.

**uterus.** The muscular organ in which the fetus develops.

**version.** The process of turning the child during birth to change the presentation.

**wedding.** The ceremony solemnizing marriage. The public act by which a couple pass from singleness to the married state. *Wedding* and *marriage* are not synonymous, although we do speak of a marriage ceremony.

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